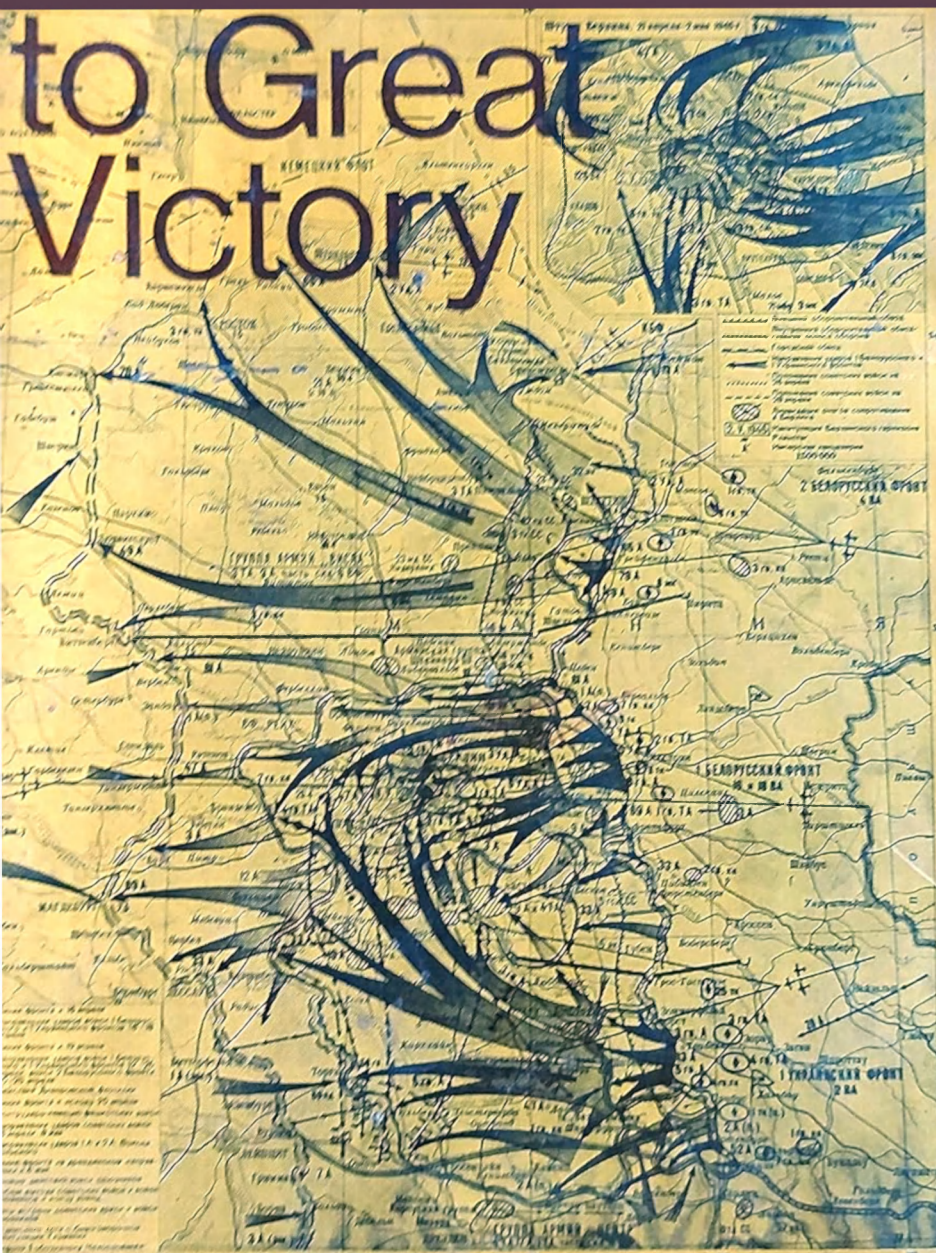


# *Vilnis Sipols* The Road

## to Great Victory





*Vilnis Sipols*

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# The Road to Great Victory

Soviet  
Diplomacy  
1941-1945



Progress Publishers  
Moscow

Translated from the Russian by *Lev Bobrov*  
Designed by *Gennady Gubanov*

**В. Я. Сипола**

**НА ПУТИ К ВЕЛИКОЙ ПОБЕДЕ  
СОВЕТСКАЯ ДИПЛОМАТИЯ В 1941-45 гг.**

*На английском языке*

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## INTRODUCTION

World War II came as so much of a shock to so many peoples as not to have been forgotten to this day, four decades since it was over.

Both world wars were started by imperialist Germany. The aims of the Reich remained essentially the same: it sought to dominate Europe and, subsequently, the rest of the world. Its major object was to destroy the Soviet Union. That was, apart from everything else, a class war which made it particularly fierce.

The land-grabbing ambitions of the Reich were obvious soon after Hitler and his gang came to power in January 1933. The Soviet Union lost no time in launching a vigorous campaign to oppose the danger of Nazism and to have war averted by the collective efforts of European nations. A Soviet-sponsored convention defining aggression was concluded between the U.S.S.R. and a number of countries in the summer of 1933. Late in 1933, the Soviet Government proposed setting up a system of collective security in Europe to comprise the U.S.S.R., France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium and some other States threatened by Nazism. The negotiations led to a Soviet-French and a Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty of mutual assistance being signed in May 1935. The Soviet Government worked hard to strengthen the League of Nations and turn it into an effective vehicle in action for peace and security. Furthermore, the U.S.S.R. considered it necessary to establish close cooperation with Britain and France as well as with the United States in order to curb the German aggressors. There was, however, no favourable response from the governing quarters of the said States.

Those States could not be said to fail to appreciate the significance of cooperation with the U.S.S.R. in efforts to

prevent Germany starting another world war. But the British Government, headed by Neville Chamberlain, clung to the policy of "appeasement". It sought a "broad agreement" with the Reich in the hope of diverting German aggression from the British Empire and channelling it against the Soviet Union. The French Government was following in the wake of the British Cabinet's policy, having virtually abandoned an independent foreign policy. The Neutrality Acts, adopted by the U.S. Congress, also played into the aggressors' hands, as they assured them non-intervention of the U.S. in the event of war.

Unfortunately, the Soviet Government's action to have war prevented through collective efforts by the U.S.S.R., Britain, France, the United States and other countries did not succeed. The policy of acquiescence in the predatory ambitions of Germany, Japan, and Italy, pursued by Britain, France and the United States, gave the bloc of fascist aggressors an opportunity to trigger off the Second World War. Having started the war on September 1, 1939, the German Reich brought Poland, France and most of other countries of Europe under its sway.

Under those circumstances, Britain and the United States finally realised the importance of cooperation with the Soviet Union.

Only after Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, in June 1941, did a coalition of the U.S.S.R., Britain, and the United States and a number of other countries begin to take shape, which proved to be a major factor in defeating Hitlerism.

## **Chapter I**

# **SOVIET DIPLOMACY AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR**

At daybreak on June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union with Finland, Romania, Hungary and Italy as the parties to the aggression.

The Soviet people had to live through an ordeal that no other nation ever had to face. Yet the U.S.S.R. succeeded, within a historically brief space of time since 1917, in bringing its economic and defence strength to such a level as to be in a position to confront, single-handed at first, an extremely powerful aggressor bloc and win out in consequence.

Many nations, including all the Great Powers, except the United States of America, found themselves drawn into the maelstrom of World War II by the summer of 1941.

Having started full-scale preparations for war well in advance, the aggressors created a war machine which had no precedent in history and which, in their opinion, could crush any adversary. Imperialist Germany had certain advantages as she attacked the U.S.S.R. The whole of her economy and all of her highly-developed industry had for years worked to supply the needs of war, first and foremost. In consequence, the German forces had a vast amount of most up-to-date military hardware, surpassing other countries in that respect. Besides, the German forces had captured strategic stocks and arms in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Czechoslovakia (the German Reich had the armaments of over a hundred divisions at their disposal). The economies of those industrialised nations were providing Germany with military equipment.

Germany had a substantial supply of well-trained military manpower, with militarism worshipped for centuries.

The military aristocracy enjoyed tremendous influence. The German forces learned quite a few expedients of modern warfare in the course of the hostilities starting from September 1939. The military operations they conducted against Poland and France left no room for doubt as to the high degree of combat readiness of the German troops. Germany was an extremely dangerous foe.

By June 1941, the armed forces of Nazi Germany and her European allies had more than ten million men and officers, 90,000 guns and mortars, 6,600 tanks and assault guns, 13,600 combat aircraft. There were 153 German divisions and 37 divisions of her allies in the aggression—altogether 190 divisions of a total strength of 5.5 million—poised across the border to attack the U.S.S.R. Those forces had 47,200 guns and mortars, close on 4,300 tanks and assault guns, and some 5,000 combat aircraft.<sup>1</sup>

The Nazi leaders were bent on destroying the U.S.S.R. as a socialist State, capturing much of its territory, and natural wealth, and depriving the Soviet people of their national independence, exterminating some of the Soviet population and turning others into rightless slaves of the German “master race”. Germany’s partners shared those predatory and reactionary aims.

To repulse the aggression, the Soviet people rose, under the leadership of the Communist Party, in what came to be known as the Great Patriotic War.

Vyacheslav Molotov, Vice-Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars and People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs, in a broadcast at noon on June 22, told the Soviet people about the German attack and about air-raids and shell fire from Romanian and Finnish territories. “It is not the first time,” he said, “that our people are having to deal with an attacking self-conceited enemy. There was a time when our people reacted with a Patriotic War to Napoleon’s crusade against Russia and Napoleon was defeated, brought to his downfall. The same will happen to the arrogant Hitler who has announced yet another crusade against our country. The Red Army and our entire people will again wage a victorious Patriotic War in behalf of our Homeland, its honour, and its freedom...”

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Second World War, 1939-1945* in 12 volumes, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1975, pp. 13, 21 (in Russian).



"Ours is a just cause. The enemy will be crushed. We shall win."<sup>1</sup>

A State Defence Committee, headed by Stalin, was set up on June 30. Its rulings had the force of war-time law.

The Soviet Army was a considerable force by June 1941. It had 5,373,000 men. It was armed with over 67,000 field guns and mortars, 1,861 tanks, and upwards of 2,700 combat aircraft of new types. Besides, the forces had a good stock of serviceable military equipment of old types. Material and technical resources which had been created by the time the war started were enough for volume production of new types of military hardware and armaments. There were 170 divisions of a total strength of 2,680,000 stationed in the Western borderland areas of the U.S.S.R. They had 37,500 guns and mortars, 1,475 tanks and 1,540 combat aircraft of new types.<sup>2</sup>

That is to say the enemy had superior forces at the outset. His powerful strike groups were by far superior in strength to the opposing Soviet armies in major battlefields. All that put the Soviet Army in an extremely complicated position at the outbreak of the war. Under Plan Barbarossa, the German forces launched their offensive in three major directions—aiming at Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. In the opening weeks of the war, the German troops succeeded in penetrating deep inside Soviet territory.

However, the fundamental miscalculation that the Nazi rulers had made in taking their decision to start a war against the Soviet Union was becoming obvious little by little. Blinded by their anti-communism, they just failed to comprehend the essence and character of the system of power in the Soviet Union and the greatest-ever potentialities of a socialist State. They underestimated the strength of the Soviet economy based on the socialist mode of production, the force of socialist ideology, the moral and political unity of the Soviet people, the unbreakable friendship of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., and the might of the Soviet Armed Forces. The armies of Hitler's Germany and her accomplices had to confront the physical and moral strength of the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union During the Patriotic War. Documents and Records* (hereinafter—*The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*) in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1944, pp. 111-113 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Second World War, 1939-1945*, Vol. 4, pp. 18, 25 (in Russian).

Soviet people united and consolidated, led by the Communist Party. All that predetermined the subsequent course of the war with historical inevitability.

As the hostilities progressed, it became evident that the fascist aggressors, for all the gains they had scored in the opening stages of the war, could not break the will of the Soviet people and of their heroic Soviet Army to resistance. On the contrary, Soviet opposition to the enemy mounted day by day.

### **PRIORITIES OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY**

Soviet foreign policy had to face problems of paramount importance as soon as the war began. The main object of Soviet diplomatic activity right from the outset was to ensure a favourable external environment for effective rebuff to the fascist aggressors, for their quickest expulsion from Soviet soil and their final defeat.

The major specific concern of Soviet diplomacy was to unite all forces opposed to the bloc of fascist aggressors: establish a coalition of the U.S.S.R, Britain, the United States and other countries that were willing to cooperate with them.

First and foremost, Soviet diplomacy had to establish an allied relationship with the nations already at war with Germany and Italy. Wartime cooperation with Britain was a top priority as she was the only Great Power to be at war with the countries of the fascist bloc, although she was not fighting them at anything like full strength. Hostilities between Britain and Germany went on principally at sea and in the air. There was no immediate front between them. The U.S.S.R. had a stake in a close war-time alliance with Britain and in her intensifying combat operations against Germany.

Although the war had long escalated into a world war, the division of forces in the world was not yet complete by June 1941. The United States of America was still out of the game. The U.S. Government had repeatedly declared that it wanted Nazi Germany defeated and Britain to win out. There was close cooperation between the United States and Britain. A growing amount of military hardware was flowing into Britain from the United States which by no means signified a total obliteration of contradictions be-

tween these two Powers. The United States was increasingly active in exploiting the weakened positions of the British Empire in some parts of the world to strengthen its own foothold.

The Soviet Union was interested in establishing the closest possible cooperation with the U.S., notably, in order to obtain military equipment and other materials essential for the prosecution of the war both for cash and on credit. There could be no particular doubt that the United States would be eventually drawn into the world war. That could substantially change the power balance of the belligerent forces. Therefore, one task of Soviet diplomacy was to promote relations with the United States as much as possible. True, that was no easy thing to do, considering the class hatred of American reactionaries for Socialism.

The shaping of the anti-Hitler coalition was not a simple one-time act. The general political aims of the Soviet Union in the war differed essentially from those pursued by Britain and the United States. These Powers, while cooperating with the U.S.S.R. in the war against the bloc of fascist aggressors, did their utmost to hamstring their Soviet Ally. In working to bring about an anti-Hitler coalition, Soviet diplomacy had to overcome stubborn resistance of most influential quarters in Western countries which opposed cooperation with the U.S.S.R.

The position of Japan was a point of extreme importance to the Soviet Union. In the context of the war against Nazi Germany and her European allies, an attack by militarist Japan would have further aggravated the situation of the Soviet Union, extremely difficult as it was. In those circumstances, Soviet diplomacy had to do all it could to forestall a Japanese attack.

A danger of no mean importance lurked across the Southern border. Nazi Germany had succeeded in establishing close contact with the ruling circles of Turkey and Iran by the summer of 1941. One fact that had to be taken into account was that these countries, particularly Turkey, could likewise have emerged as Germany's allies in the war against the U.S.S.R. Soviet diplomacy was to prevent the events from taking such a course. Moreover, it was to try and sway those countries to cooperation with the U.S.S.R., Britain and other nations which were fighting against the bloc of fascist aggressors.

The Soviet people were interested, besides, in combat

cooperation with the peoples of the countries occupied by the fascist aggressors. In setting out the Soviet Government's position in his broadcast on July 3, J.V. Stalin declared that the purpose of the U.S.S.R. in the Great Patriotic War was "not only to remove the danger hanging over our country, but to help all the peoples of Europe groaning under the yoke of German Nazism".<sup>1</sup>

#### THE BRITISH AND U.S. STANCE AS REGARDS THE U.S.S.R.

Germany's attack on the U.S.S.R. met the interests of the ruling circles of Great Britain, the U.S. and other Western countries. But the alignment of forces in the world turned out to be different from what the British and French "Munich dealers" had dreamt of. They had sought to provoke a war between Germany and the Soviet Union in a setting where they could have stayed away as a "third delighted party". But those treacherous plans fell through. France sustained a military defeat and suffered a national disaster. Before Germany attacked the U.S.S.R., London had feared that before long the whole German war machine might be thrown into action against Great Britain herself as well as against her colonial empire. Now, the balance of forces was by no means in Britain's favour. Besides, Britain had virtually found herself without allies whereas her colonial possessions were in danger of being attacked not only by German forces but, together with them, by those of the other members of the fascist bloc—Italy and Japan. That is to say the British Empire would have found itself in an extremely precarious position. Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Cadogan, pointed out in his diaries (June 30) that *Russia was "the only hopeful sign"*.<sup>2</sup>

Yet not even after Germany's attack on the U.S.S.R. did things settle in London in any way because all that it expected was a temporary respite. The British Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., Sir Stafford Cripps, just back from London where he had heard the views of Churchill and other British politicians, said in a conversation with the U.S. Ambassador in

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<sup>1</sup> *Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. I, p.29 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-1945*, Edited by David Dilks, Cassel, London, 1971, p.390. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

Moscow on June 27: "It would be frightful if the Russians should collapse. That would mean an attempt at invasion of Britain in September."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, there was a feeling of relief in Britain. The immediate danger of a German invasion receded. A large banner appeared in London saying: "Quiet Nights, Thanks to Russia."<sup>2</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury Hewlett Johnson declared that "in defending Moscow, Russia is defending London".<sup>3</sup>

There was what amounted to the unanimous opinion in British ruling circles that it would, in any case, take the German Reich no longer to defeat the U.S.S.R. than it had taken it to defeat France. But London was certainly interested in having German forces diverted from the British Empire as long as possible and substantially whittled down. Having obtained an opportunity to pay less attention to the defence of Britain itself, the Churchill government laid emphasis in its war plans on action to ensure British imperial interests.

Britain's policy with regard to the U.S.S.R. was, naturally, just as much of a component of her imperialist policy. The class-inspired hostility of Britain's reactionary ruling circles for the Soviet Union as a Socialist State continued to exist. But inter-imperialist contradictions had sharpened so much as to threaten the very existence of the British Empire and the "British lion" decided to try and catch, even if for a time, at what London believed to be a Soviet "straw".

As soon as 1941 set in, Churchill began to receive information through various channels about Germany's preparations for attacking the U.S.S.R., and he impatiently waited for that day. In fact, he was not just waiting for it, but did all he could to bring it nearer. At the same time, in spite of his class hatred for the Soviet State, Churchill had come, by mid-June, to the final conclusion that, in the event of Germany attacking the U.S.S.R., he would speak out for cooperation with the latter.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereinafter—FRUS), *Diplomatic Papers. 1941*, Vol. 1, United States, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1958, p.177.

<sup>2</sup> D. F. Fleming, *The Cold War and Its Origins, 1917-1960*, Vol. I, London, 1961, p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 4, p.221 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Eden, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was anxious lest Britain's hostile stance should induce the Soviet

On learning about the German invasion of the U.S.S.R. in the morning of June 22, Churchill made a broadcast speech the same day. "No one has been a more consistent opponent of Communism," he declared, "than I have for the last twenty-five years. I will unsay no word that I have spoken about it." That meant that his class attitude, as a representative of British imperialism, to the Soviet state had not changed in any way. But Churchill pointed out that any State that fought against Germany would have British aid. It follows, therefore, he said, that the British Government would give the Soviet Union "any technical or economic assistance which is in our power, and which is likely to be of service to them". He went on to remark that Germany's attack on the U.S.S.R. would fortify Britain. After the destruction of Soviet Russia, Hitler intended to bring back the main strength of his army from the East and hurl it upon the British Isles. He hoped that he might once again set out to destroy his enemies one by one so as to clear the scene for the final act, the subjugation of the Western Hemisphere. "The Russian danger is therefore our danger, and the danger of the United States..." he said. "Let us learn the lessons already taught by such cruel experience. Let us redouble our exertions, and strike with united strength."<sup>1</sup>

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Union to surrender without armed resistance, which would have intensified the danger for the British Empire. Therefore, at a War Cabinet meeting on June 2, he offered to inform the Soviet Government that if Russia was attacked by Germany, Great Britain would "take action elsewhere to relieve the pressure" (Public Record Office, Cab. 65/18). On June 13, Anthony Eden, speaking on Winston Churchill's behalf, told the Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain, Ivan Maisky, that if a war broke out between the U.S.S.R. and Germany in the foreseeable future, the British Government was prepared to assist the Soviet Union with air support in the Middle East and to dispatch a military mission to the U.S.S.R. to pass on experience to, and develop cooperation with, the Soviet Union, using the route through the Persian Gulf or Vladivostok to that end (P. P. Sevostyanov, *Before the Great Ordeal. The Foreign Policy of the U.S.S.R. on the Eve of the Great Patriotic War, September 1939-June 1941*, Moscow, 1981, pp. 167-168 (in Russian)).

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, June 23, 1941.

American historian William McNeill, commenting on Churchill's position in respect of the U.S.S.R., wrote: "It was peculiar irony of history that the Englishman who had been most outspoken in his advocacy of the Allied policy of intervention against the Bolsheviks should be the person who as war-time Prime Minister of Great Britain welcomed Soviet Russia as a new and much needed Ally in the strug-



For the U.S.S.R. that was, beyond dispute, an important statement as it meant that Britain did not intend to make a separate peace and strike a deal with Germany which German emissaries (Rudolf Hess and others) had been sounding out for some time, but intended to cooperate with the Soviet Union in fighting against the common foe. However, Churchill's pronouncements regarding the character of that cooperation were extremely restrained. What the British Premier referred to was not a political or military alliance, nor close military cooperation with the aim of defeating the fascist aggressors as quickly as possible, but a readiness to supply the Soviet Union with a certain amount of military hardware and other items essential to it in the war.

As early as June 22, Vyacheslav Molotov cabled to the Soviet Ambassador in London to set out the Soviet Government's position of principle concerning Soviet-British mutual assistance: "It will be understood that the Soviet Government will not want to accept Britain's aid without compensation and that it will, in its turn, be ready to lend assistance to Britain."<sup>1</sup>

One cannot help noting that there were quite a few people among the British Conservatives whose class hatred for the Soviet Union predetermined their policy even when Britain's fate depended on the ability of the U.S.S.R. to oppose the aggressors. Those were the same elements that had supported Chamberlain's Munich policy.<sup>2</sup>

But what prevailed in that situation extremely dangerous for Britain was the course advocated by Churchill, Eden, Beaverbrook and some other British leaders. Beaverbrook thought, for example, that "Soviet Russia's victory would be Great Britain's victory".<sup>3</sup>

Since the U.S. was not as yet in a state of war and the danger facing it was not so grave, the differences over the

gle against Hitler." (William Hardy McNeill, *America, Britain & Russia. Their Co-operation and Conflict. 1941-1946*, Oxford University Press, London, New York, Toronto, 1953, p.49.)

<sup>1</sup> *Anglo-Soviet Relations During the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945, Documents and Records* (hereinafter—*Anglo-Soviet Relations... Documents*), Vol. 1, Moscow, 1984, p.47 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Barker, *Churchill and Eden at War*, Macmillan Ltd., London, 1978, p.228.

<sup>3</sup> A. J. P. Taylor, *Beaverbrook*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1972, p.476.

*The Daily Express*, *Sunday Express* and *Evening Standard*, which belonged to Beaverbrook, widely circulated his views about the need for cooperation with the U. S. S. R.

attitude to the U.S.S.R. among the policy-makers of U.S. imperialism turned out to be wider.

One noteworthy document is the U.S. State Department's Memorandum of June 21, 1941, which set out U.S. policy, as it had shaped up by that time, with regard to the Soviet Union in case of a German attack:

"We should offer the Soviet Union no suggestions or advice unless the Soviet Union approaches us.

"If the Soviet Government should approach us direct requesting assistance, we should so far as possible, without interfering in our aid to Great Britain and to victims of aggression or without seriously affecting our own efforts of preparedness, relax restrictions on exports to the Soviet Union...

"In particular, we should engage in no undertaking which might make it appear that we have not acted in good faith if later we should refuse to recognize a refugee Soviet Government or cease to recognize the Soviet Ambassador in Washington as the diplomatic representative of Russia in case the Soviet Union should be defeated and the Soviet Government should be obliged to leave the country."<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. State Department thus found it possible to support the U.S.S.R. to a certain if only most restricted, extent, since its struggle weakened the most dangerous potential military opponent of the United States. And yet that document was infused with a spirit of hatred for the Soviet State. The State Department, the overwhelming majority of its staff holding most reactionary, anti-Soviet views, already considered the destruction of the U.S.S.R. to be a foregone conclusion.

As to the U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, trying, wherever and in any way possible, to keep Great Britain "afloat", he was ready to go along with Churchill who considered it important for Britain to have the agony of the U.S.S.R. kept up and its funeral put off. Therefore, he decided to support Churchill's position with regard to the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup>

On June 23, the U.S. Administration published a statement setting out its position. It qualified Germany's attack on the U.S.S.R. as fresh proof of Germany's ambition to win world supremacy. In the opinion of the Government of the

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. 1941*, Vol. 1, pp.766-767.

<sup>2</sup> W. L. Langer and S. E. Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, New York, 1953, p.531.

United States, the statement said: "Any defence against Hitlerism, any rallying of the forces opposing Hitlerism, from whatever source these forces may spring, will hasten the eventual downfall of the present German leaders and will therefore redound to the benefit of our own defense and security. Hitler's armies are today the chief dangers of the Americas."<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the U.S. Government just as Churchill found it necessary to show their negative attitude to Communism in that statement. On the following day, Roosevelt stated the United States readiness to cooperate with the U.S.S.R.<sup>2</sup>

The position of Roosevelt and his chief aide Harry Hopkins could best be seen from the draft presidential speech in Congress: Russia's defeat would enable the Nazis "to come down with all of their force against the West... An attack by the Nazis on Russia creates the greatest danger as well as the greatest opportunity for us at the same time. We must take that opportunity before the danger has become fatal for us." That speech was never pronounced but it shows how important the ability of the U.S.S.R. to hold out in the face of an aggressor's onslaught was for U.S. destinies as well.<sup>3</sup>

U.S. Secretary of War Henry Stimson also wrote that Germany's attack on the U.S.S.R., making things easier for the United States, was like a "providential occurrence".<sup>4</sup>

The above-quoted statements by the Governments of Britain and the United States showed the interest they had in a certain measure of cooperation with the U.S.S.R. since all of those three Powers had found themselves face to face with a common dangerous enemy—Nazi Germany. But at the same time, they unequivocally indicated that the ruling circles of these Powers considered it necessary, even in their statements, to remind everybody once again about their class hatred for Communism and to emphasise that what they meant was extraordinary and enforced cooperation. Indeed, the situation had nothing to match it in all history: Britain and the United States agreed to military cooperation with the Soviet Union, that is with a socialist State,

<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. 1941*, Vol. 1, pp.767-768.

<sup>2</sup> *The New York Times*, June 25, 1941.

<sup>3</sup> V. L. Malkov, "Harry Hopkins: Pages from a Political Biography", *Novaya i noveishaya istoria* (Modern and Recent History), No.3, 1979, p.120.

<sup>4</sup> Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, London: Oxford University Press, 1957, p.10.

so as to strengthen their hand in a clash with another imperialist group. Naturally, they realised that they were relieving the pressure on the Soviet Union, the State they hated so much. But they had no other way out. Besides, as I said, they did not think that this cooperation would do the U.S.S.R. any good to speak of, considering that all it could do was to prolong a little its resistance to the aggressors.

Quite a few American and British leaders made no secret of their hope that in the war between Germany and Russia, both sides would be bled white, so that the U.S. and the British Empire would get a chance to maintain and even strengthen their international positions. There is the notorious statement by Senator Harry Truman (the later-to-be President): "If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible, although I don't want to see Hitler victorious under any circumstances."<sup>1</sup> Roy O. Woodruff of the U.S. House of Representatives declared on June 24 that the more damage the Nazis and the Russians did to each other, the better.<sup>2</sup> Some British politicians also expressed the opinion that the best outcome would be for Germany and the U.S.S.R. to wear each other out with the result that Britain could have the dominating power in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

A former U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., Joseph Davies, said in those days: "In this country there are large classes of people who abhor the Soviets to the extent that they hope for a Hitler victory in Russia."<sup>4</sup>

American and British reactionary newspapers carried similar anti-Soviet articles. They still published a lot of material hostile to, and spurious about, the U.S.S.R.

Class-inspired hatred for the Soviet Union made itself felt also in the forecasts made in London and Washington about the outcome of the war between Germany and the U.S.S.R. An official history of the Second World War, published in Britain, admitted that most of the British experts "believed that the campaign in European Russia

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<sup>1</sup> *The New York Times*, June 24, 1941.

<sup>2</sup> *United States of America Congressional Record. Proceedings and Debates of the 77th Congress. First Session*, Appendix, Vol. 87, Part 12, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1941, p. A3052.

<sup>3</sup> W. P. and Zelda K. Coates, *A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations*, Lawrence & Wishart and the Pilot Press, London, 1945, pp. 648-685.

<sup>4</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins. An Intimate History*, Grosset & Dunlap, New York, 1950, p. 307.

would be over in a few months or even weeks".<sup>1</sup> The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, John Dill, maintained that the Russians would be done with in no more than six or seven weeks.<sup>2</sup> He said the Germans would go through Russia "like a hot knife through butter".<sup>3</sup>

In yet another typical statement, the British Ambassador in Moscow, Sir Stafford Cripps, told a British War Cabinet meeting that "Russia could not hold out against Germany for more than three or four weeks. By the end of that time, the enemy might be in Leningrad, Moscow and Kieff." The only hope, Cripps believed, was for some of the Russian forces to withdraw into Siberia where they "might have a good chance of holding out".<sup>4</sup>

Similar predictions were made in the U.S. American military authorities presumed that the Nazis would take the least time to defeat the U.S.S.R. On June 23, Secretary of War Stimson recommended to Roosevelt to act on the assumption that the Germans would be quite occupied with the war against the Soviet Union "for a minimum of one month and a possible maximum of three months". That view was shared by Navy Secretary Frank Knox.

American historian W. H. McNeill stated that "Americans almost universally expected an early German victory" and the Soviet-German war "was welcomed mainly as a diversion of German strength from the British Isles".<sup>5</sup>

Joseph Davies, U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. in 1936-1938, was about the only one in official Washington to hold a different opinion. Certain as he was of Soviet defence capability and of the need for the U.S. to cooperate with the U.S.S.R., Davies wrote on July 7: 1. The U.S. has no alternative but to establish such cooperation. 2. The Soviet Union and its army, in spite of the reverses of the opening days of the war, have every opportunity to surmount the difficulties caused by the perfidious attack and to inflict military defeat on the Wehrmacht.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. R. M. Butler, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. II, *September 1939-June 1941*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1957, p.544.

<sup>2</sup> *The Memoirs of Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon. The Reckoning*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1965, p.312.

<sup>3</sup> *The Memoirs of General the Lord Ismay*, Heinemann, London Melbourne, Toronto, 1960, pp.225.

<sup>4</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/22.

<sup>5</sup> W. H. McNeill, *America, Britain & Russia*, p.20.

<sup>6</sup> *Modern and Recent History*, No. 3, 1979, p.120 (in Russian).

As to the working masses of Britain and the U.S., they wanted the closest possible cooperation of their countries with the Soviet Union in the struggle against the fascist aggressors. American historians, Langer and Gleason, who had earlier worked for the U.S. State Department, pointed out: "Despite contrary military opinion, it was popularly believed that ... the Nazis would not be able to annihilate the Soviet forces. Under the circumstances, there was in Britain overwhelming sentiment for agreement with Soviet Russia."<sup>1</sup>

British and American trade unions were increasingly vocal in urging close cooperation with the Soviet Union. Eighty-seven per cent of the Americans favoured such cooperation, 12 per cent were against, and one per cent abstained in a U.S. opinion poll. As the coalition of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the U.S. shaped up, the solidarity of the Soviet, British and American peoples gained in strength.

Although in the capitalist countries foreign policy-making has all along been the exclusive prerogative of the ruling establishment, in those particular circumstances, the Governments of Britain and the U.S. could not fail to reckon, at least to a certain extent, with the stand of the mass of the people.

So as the fascist aggressors set out to gain world supremacy, Great Britain and the U.S. had a stake in cooperation with the Soviet Union. Class considerations in their policies towards the U.S.S.R. had receded into the background, as it were, although they were still influencing the attitude of both Western Powers all the time.

#### SOVIET-BRITISH AGREEMENT OF JULY 12, 1941

The Soviet Government moved into high gear with a view to establishing all-round mutually advantageous war-time cooperation with Britain and the U.S. so as to arrest the onslaught of the aggressors and defeat them as quickly as possible.

Progress in relations between the three Powers depended mostly on developments on the Soviet-German front. After Germany's attack on the U.S.S.R., it became the major battlefield of the Second World War. Hostilities in some other parts of the world were of third-, not even second-

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<sup>1</sup> W. L. Langer and S.E. Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p.534.



rate, importance beside it. The events on the Soviet-German front predetermined the course and outcome of the entire Second World War.

Since the U.S. was not as yet involved in the war, the Soviet Union still had to solve, above all, the problem of joining forces with Britain in the war effort. Having been in a state of war for nearly two years, but conducting combat operations primarily at sea and in the air, Britain did much to mobilise her resources. With Germany's main strength thrown into action against the Soviet Union, Britain could naturally have been far more active against the common foe and, besides, could have supplied the Soviet Union with some of the military equipment produced in England proper and in British dominions, like Canada. That was particularly essential in the opening stages of the Great Patriotic War, that is, before the U.S.S.R. had reconverted its entire economy to supplying the needs of war production. The Soviet Army had less military equipment than the German forces, and so such deliveries were of no mean importance to the U.S.S.R.

In view of Britain's hostile policy towards the U.S.S.R. in the preceding years, political relations between the two countries were at the lowest ebb by 1941. Since both nations were now at war with Germany, the Soviet Government undertook certain steps towards establishing the closest possible political, military and economic cooperation between them.

During a meeting with Anthony Eden on June 26, the Soviet Ambassador in London, Ivan Maisky, said it was important to try and create a larger measure of understanding between the U.S.S.R. and Britain when both countries were in battle against the common foe.<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet initiative was not supported by the British Government. On the same day, the British Foreign Secretary telegraphed to his embassy in Moscow: "I thought that we must proceed most carefully. The Ambassador would understand how deeply the dislike of Communism was rooted in this country. Nothing could be more unfortunate than that the impression should ever get abroad that, in a desire to promote better Anglo-Russian understanding, His Majesty's Government were lending itself to the popularising of Communist creeds, to which, in fact, they were strongly

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, FO 371/29466/6157.

opposed."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the British Government wanted to escape any commitments to the U.S.S.R. But the position of the British Empire was so fragile and precarious that it could not dictate to the Soviet Union its own terms of cooperation. So London had, willy-nilly, to take into account the standpoint of the Soviet Government as well.

On June 28, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov told the British Ambassador in Moscow, Sir Stafford Cripps, that it would be desirable to strengthen Soviet-British political cooperation and to conclude a political agreement to that end. The British Ambassador, however, declined the offer. "We did not contemplate any political agreement at this stage," Cripps wrote. "We suggest that the political basis was the common enmity against Hitler, but while this was a sound basis for military and economic cooperation, it was not a satisfactory basis for a political agreement. Our new relations had only existed since last Sunday and it was better to wait till we had learnt to trust each other over a period of military and economic cooperation before trying to put our political relations into the form of a military agreement. I hoped that this would follow at a future date, probably at a Peace Conference if we were victorious." Cripps recommended to his Government to remain absolutely firm in this matter.<sup>2</sup>

Such pronouncements of the British Ambassador, reflecting as they did the position of official London, could not but put the Soviet Government on the alert.

In a conversation with Cripps on July 8, 1941, Stalin reverted to the Soviet offer to conclude a political agreement, pointing out that it was necessary in order to clear up the position of both sides and to create a broad basis for joint efforts. That agreement committed the contracting parties to mutual help. Neither party was to conclude a separate peace.<sup>3</sup>

The restated Soviet offer, coming as it did this time from the Head of Government, had its effect. In his message to London, reporting that conversation, Cripps called for the Soviet offer to be accepted. He pointed out the reason behind his change of heart, explaining thereby what had worried the British most of all since it could have caused them to face disaster. Cripps pointed out that such an agreement

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, FO 371/29466/6157.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Public Record Office, FO 371/29467/6163.

would "bind the Russians to continuing their resistance".<sup>1</sup>

Churchill assessed the situation in a similar way: "The advantage we should reap if the Russians could keep the field and go on with the war, at any rate until the winter closes in is measureless. A premature peace by Russia would be a terrible disappointment."<sup>2</sup>

At the British War Cabinet meeting on July 9, it was generally agreed that the Soviet offer had to be accepted. Discussions turned mainly on the question of form: should it be an exchange of notes, a Declaration or Agreement, or a formal Treaty of Mutual Assistance? It was found that an exchange of notes was not adequate, but the signature of a Treaty would be too much. In the end, it was decided to suggest the publication of a joint Declaration. It was found advisable to transmit an appropriate proposal to Stalin through a message from Churchill.

On July 10, 1941, Churchill sent a message to Stalin accepting the Soviet offer in principle but he wanted the whole thing to be reduced to the publication of a Declaration by the two sides. Cripps also handed over the draft of the Declaration he had received from London to the head of the Soviet Government. Stalin immediately proposed a number of amendments so that the document could have the form of an agreement, rather than a Declaration. The British Government finally accepted that proposal.

In consequence, an Agreement for Joint Action of the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain in the War Against Germany was signed in Moscow on July 12. The Agreement read:

"1. The two Governments mutually undertake to render each other assistance and support of all kinds in the present war against Hitlerite Germany.

"2. They further undertake that during this war they will neither negotiate nor conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement."<sup>3</sup>

The Agreement came into force upon signature.

However, the above-quoted documents regarding the position of the British Government show that it still attached but limited importance to the Agreement. What was particularly indicative was the message sent by the Foreign Office on the day of signature to the British diplomatic

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/19.

<sup>2</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. III, *The Grand Alliance*, Cassell & Co. Ltd., London, Toronto, 1950, p.341.

<sup>3</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p.14.

representatives in Spain, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland. It said that the Declaration "does no more than record the existing military collaboration against the common enemy and our determination to go through this war to the end. It implies no alteration in our attitude, as explained in the Prime Minister's broadcast, to the Communist system".<sup>1</sup>

Although the Agreement had a rather general character, and contained no agreed position of both parties on major political issues relating to the war, nor any concrete obligations of both parties as regards joint action in the war, it was, nevertheless, one of great importance in point of principle. It laid the foundations for an allied relationship between the U.S.S.R. and Britain, and became a cornerstone of the alliance of the nations in battle against the fascist bloc.

At the same time, those opening contacts between the two Governments showed that the ruling circles of Britain, and Churchill in particular, were not anxious to establish genuinely comprehensive political, military and economic cooperation with the U.S.S.R. in the common war against the fascist aggressors.

The British Government concerned itself, first and foremost, with the problems of defence of the British Empire and of the colonial possessions scattered all over the world, that is, with the positions of British imperialism in the world. One clear indication of that was the directives sent on July 14 by the British Chiefs of Staff to General Macfarlane, head of the British Military Mission in the U.S.S.R. Referring to the latter's communication that, in the Russians' opinion, Britain was not doing all she could in terms of her war effort, the directives pointed out that the Russians "*must save themselves*". Britain was claimed to be in no position to undertake any serious military action that could have made things easier for the Soviet Union. Her strategy was to weaken Germany by air, naval and economic action. The main thing, however, was to maintain Britain's position in the Middle and Far East.

By that time, Britain had large armed strength, including land forces, at her disposal. But those were deployed mostly in the strategic centres of the British Empire around the world and the British Government had no intention of bringing them together for effective cooperation with the

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, FO 371/29467/6163.

Soviet Union in order to defeat Hitler Germany as soon as possible.

At the same time Churchill admitted that the Russian front had "now become the decisive front" and "the threat of invasion to our Island was removed" so long as the German armies were engaged on that front.<sup>1</sup>

### HARRY HOPKINS' VISIT TO MOSCOW

The Soviet Union, at war with Hitler Germany, which had the industries of almost all capitalist Europe working for her war machine, was naturally interested in getting military hardware from other countries opposed to the bloc of fascist aggressors.

Objectively, such opportunity existed. The process of re-conversion of U.S. industry to military production was gathering momentum. On the other hand, the U.S. Government showed interest in having its potential adversaries weakened by somebody else. To enable other countries to inflict more damage on the aggressor bloc, the U.S. Government was ready to offer them a certain amount of military equipment. Some in the U.S. ruling establishment clearly realised that it was the Soviet Union that could inflict the greatest damage on Germany in those circumstances. Therefore, the U.S. Government was inclined to accept the idea of certain cooperation with the U.S.S.R., including the possibility of eventually supplying it with some military equipment.

However, as stated earlier on, U.S. ruling circles were under considerable influence of individuals who, out of class-inspired considerations, went on opposing all cooperation, with, above all, arms supplies to the U.S.S.R.

A mere 6.5 million dollars' worth of war material purchased by Soviet representatives, that is, a negligible amount indeed, had been shipped to the U.S.S.R. from the U.S. by the end of July. Even American historians find those supplies to have been insignificant.<sup>2</sup>

Roosevelt raised the point in Cabinet that although "nearly six weeks have elapsed since the Russian War began ... we have done practically nothing to get any of the

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<sup>1</sup>Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. III, pp.402, 477.

<sup>2</sup> W. L. Langer and S. E. Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p.560.

materials they have asked for. Frankly, the Russians feel that they have been given the run-around in the United States."<sup>1</sup>

Only when all of the deadlines Hitler had announced for his victory in his "Blitzkrieg" against the Soviet Union had passed and the U.S.S.R. had proved in actual fact that it was in a position to beat back the aggressors and was not going to lay down arms, did the Governments of Britain and the U.S. begin to give more serious consideration to the question of supplies to the Soviet Union.

In mid-July, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Jones informed the Soviet Ambassador about the U.S. Government's readiness to grant the Soviet Union loans to pay for the supplies. At the same time, he urged deliveries of manganese, chrome ore and other strategic products from the U.S.S.R. in return.<sup>2</sup> The Soviet Government immediately informed the Ambassador that it was prepared to conclude an agreement to supply the U.S. with manganese, chrome ore, flax and other traditional Soviet export items.<sup>3</sup>

One essential factor in settling the matter was the visit to the U.S.S.R. late in July 1941 by Harry Hopkins, Lend-Lease administrator who had been to London shortly before that in order to talk over with Churchill the plans for subsequent cooperation in fighting against Germany. They had arrived at the conclusion that the fate of Britain and of the war as a whole depended, above all, on "how soon the Russians collapsed".<sup>4</sup> Under the circumstances, Hopkins decided that the first thing to do was to clear up that issue. Roosevelt supported his idea of flying to Moscow and sent a message to Hopkins which he was to transmit to Stalin on behalf of the President of the United States.

"I ask you," the message said, "to treat Mr. Hopkins with the identical confidence you would feel if you were talking directly to me... May I express the great admiration of all of us in the United States for the superb bravery displayed by the Russian people in the defense of their liberty and in their fight for the independence of Russia. The success of your people and all other peoples in opposing Hitler's

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<sup>1</sup> W.L. Langer and S.E. Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p.561.

<sup>2</sup> *Soviet-American Relations During the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945. Documents and Records* (hereinafter—*Soviet-American Relations... Documents*), Vol. 1, Moscow, 1984, pp.67-68 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.74.

<sup>4</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, New York, 1949, p.315.



aggression and his plans for world conquest has been heartening to the American people.”<sup>1</sup>

On his arrival in Moscow, Hopkins informed the U.S. Ambassador, Laurence A. Steinhardt, that “the main purpose of his visit was to determine whether the situation was as disastrous as it was pictured in the War Department—and particularly as indicated in the cables from the Military Attaché, Major Ivan Yeaton.”<sup>2</sup>

The first conversation between Stalin and Hopkins took place on July 30. On the following day, the head of the Soviet Government gave Hopkins a detailed account of the situation on the front, telling him the number of divisions the U.S.S.R. had as well as the number of tanks and aircraft it had in service and was building monthly. He pointed out that the best point to use to bring in the supplies through was Arkhangelsk which could be kept open to traffic all through the winter by means of icebreakers. The route through Vladivostok was dangerous because it could be cut off by Japan at any moment. The traffic capacity of the railway line and roads in Iran was inadequate.

While declaring the U.S. and Britain to be ready to dispatch military supplies to the U.S.S.R., Hopkins told Stalin, however, that even the material “already manufactured ... could in all probability not reach his battle lines before the bad weather closes in”. He emphasised that the three governments had first to meet for a conference to make the fullest possible joint study of the strategic interests of each front as well as the interests of each of the three countries concerned. But the conference could not take place before the outcome of the fighting on the Soviet-German front was known. “Hence my suggestion to him to hold a conference at as late a date as was possible,” Hopkins wrote after the conversation with Stalin. “Then we would know whether or not there was to be a front and approximately the location of the front during the coming winter months.” Since Washington believed that because of bad roads in the autumn thaw the Germans would not be able to continue their offensive after October 1, Hopkins suggested calling the conference in the first half of October.

Stalin replied that he would welcome such a conference in Moscow. He expressed his strong conviction that the Ger-

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p.322.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.327.

man offensive could be stopped. "He believes," Hopkins reported to Roosevelt, "that the Germans underestimated the strength of the Russian Army and have not now enough troops on the whole front to carry on a successful offensive war and at the same time guard their extended lines of communications... He believes that the Germans will have to go on the defensive themselves... He believes that the morale of his own troops is extremely high... Mr. Stalin expressed repeatedly his confidence that the Russian lines would hold within 100 kilometres of their present position."<sup>1</sup>

All that Hopkins saw in the Soviet Union and also his conversations with Stalin and other Soviet statesmen had greatly impressed him. He reported to Washington: "*I feel ever so confident about this front. The morale of the population is exceptionally good. There is unbounded determination to win.*"<sup>2</sup>

However, all that was still being done was making the legal arrangements for possible supplies. On August 2, there was an exchange of Notes between the Embassy of the U.S.S.R. in Washington and the U.S. State Department, providing for the Soviet-American commercial agreement of 1937 to continue in force for another year.

At the same time, the State Department informed the Soviet Embassy that the U.S. Government had decided to give economic assistance to the Soviet Union in its struggle against armed aggression. "This decision," the State Department said in its Note, "has been prompted by the conviction of the Government of the United States that the strengthening of the armed resistance of the Soviet Union to the predatory attack of an aggressor who is threatening the security and independence not only of the Soviet Union but also of all other nations is in the interest of the national defense of the United States." Under that decision, the U.S. Government promised to give friendly consideration to the Soviet offer about placing orders in the United States and to grant export licences.<sup>3</sup>

Negotiations about the legal aspect of mutual deliveries were in progress between the Soviet and British Governments too. An Agreement between the U.S.S.R. and Britain concerning mutual deliveries, credit and payments was

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<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp.327-341.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. 1941, Vol.1, General. The Soviet Union*, p.814. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. 1941, Vol.1*, pp.815-816.

signed in Moscow on August 16, 1941. The Agreement provided for mutual commodity deliveries. Britain granted a 10 million-pound loan to the Soviet Union to pay for the British goods it was going to buy.

In actual fact, there were still no more or less substantial amount of military supplies coming to the Soviet Union from the U.S. and Great Britain.

Although London and Washington wanted the U.S.S.R. to keep fighting since it was fighting also for the interests of Great Britain and the U.S., those two Powers were, as a matter of fact, giving no support to the Soviet Union, confining themselves to verbal promises.

### SOVIET ACCESSION TO THE ATLANTIC CHARTER

Churchill and Roosevelt met in Argentia Bay, Newfoundland, from August 9 to 12, to concert their plans, taking into account the basic change in the world balance of forces, notably, because of Germany's attack on the Soviet Union. The Joint Declaration, which was published at the end of the meeting on August 14, 1941, came to be known as the Atlantic Charter. The President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain said in it that their two countries sought no aggrandizement, territorial or other; respected the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they would live; wished to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who had been forcibly deprived of them; recognised the right of all States to have access, on equal terms, to trade and to the raw materials of the world; desired to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field; expressed the hope to see established, after the war, a peace which would afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety; believed that all the nations of the world must come to the abandonment of the use of force and would aid and encourage all other practicable measures which would lighten for the peoples the crushing burden of armaments.<sup>1</sup>

So the Charter consisted of a number of general democratic principles and it did not, naturally, disclose the true aims of the American and British Governments. Roosevelt and

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. 1941*, Vol.1, pp.368-369.

Churchill found it important, first and foremost, as a propaganda ploy.

It was clear at the same time that there were certain differences of approach between Britain and the United States. The U.S., unlike Britain, wanted something more than a "negotiated peace", or "a peace without victory, resulting from the exhaustion of the combatants".<sup>1</sup> As a result of the meeting, the British found the U.S. anxious to demand a predominant part in determining the post-war settlement. Moreover, they realised that "Great Britain would be unable to refuse the demand".<sup>2</sup>

True, Roosevelt was prepared to let Britain (but nobody else) share, to a certain extent, in ruling the post-war world. In setting out his position, he said that it was "an international *police force*" composed of the United States and Great Britain that was to boss the show in the world during the early post-war period. It was not until some time later that an international organisation comprising other States could be created.<sup>3</sup> While underestimating the ability of the U.S.S.R. to repulse the fascist aggressors, the U.S. did not see it either as one of the countries qualified to take part in settling the post-war problems.

An international Conference to concert the Atlantic Charter with Britain's war-time allies was called in London in September 1941. It was attended by representatives of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Poland, Holland, Norway, Yugoslavia, Luxembourg and the Free French Movement.

The Soviet representative at the Conference, Ivan Maisky, read out the Soviet Government's Declaration accepting the basic provisions of the Charter along with stating the Soviet position of principle on major current issues. The Declaration stressed what it considered to be the most important thing: "The task before all peoples and all nations, now forced to wage a war that had been imposed on them against Hitler Germany and her allies, is *to bring about an early and crushing defeat of the aggressors*, mobilise all their forces and resources and have them used for the fullest possible solution of this problem, and determine the most effective ways and means of achieving that objec-

<sup>1</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p.203.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.204.

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS*, 1941, Vol. 1, *The Soviet Union*, p.363. (Emphasis added.— V.S.)

tive. This task is uniting our countries at this moment..."<sup>1</sup>

The representatives of other countries also approved of the Declaration, if only with some reservations.

The Atlantic Charter became the first document in which the three Powers—the U.S.S.R., the U.S., and Great Britain—joined in a public Declaration of their purposes of action against the fascist aggressors. That was a step forward in rallying them in the common struggle.

The accession of the U.S.S.R. to the Atlantic Charter contributed towards creating a more favourable environment in which to consider certain specific issues of the Soviet Union's relations with Great Britain and the U.S., including that of mutual supplies of war equipment and other materials.

### MOSCOW CONFERENCE ON MILITARY SUPPLIES

The Soviet Army's resistance to the German offensive was mounting. The deadline fixed in Berlin for routing the Soviet forces had passed. The German war machine was skidding now and again. The enemy attached special importance to the offensive in the central sector of the front—in the direction of Moscow. But the Battle of Smolensk in July through September 1941 was a telling blow to the German Blitzkrieg plans. The German offensive against Moscow ground to a halt. The German plans to take Leningrad did not succeed either. The city had been surrounded, but would not surrender, and kept up heroic defence.

The men in Berlin attached tremendous importance to the capture of the Ukraine with her wealth of natural resources. The Soviet Army put up stiff resistance, but it lacked forces and resources. The Soviet troops had to retreat. On September 19, they left Kiev. But stout fighting in the Ukraine continued.

London and Washington wanted the U.S.S.R. to continue resisting Hitler Germany.

The British and American Governments consented to their emissaries going to Moscow late in September 1941 to discuss the question of military supplies. Lord Beaverbrook was the British representative.

A Conference of representatives of the three Powers was

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 1, p. 194—in Russian. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

held in Moscow from September 29 to October 1, 1941, to consider the issue of mutual deliveries. The British Government's Minister of Supply Lord Beaverbrook and American representative Averell Harriman, who was concerned with Lend-Lease supplies, arrived to attend it. Joseph Stalin and Vyacheslav Molotov were present on behalf of the Soviet Union.

As the directives for Beaverbrook were discussed, Churchill and the British military establishment spoke up against supplies to the Soviet Union. Beaverbrook was for the supplies, considering that continued Soviet resistance could be Britain's only salvation.<sup>1</sup> In the end, Churchill yielded some ground on the condition, however, that supplies to the Soviet Union would be made "almost entirely from American resources". He stressed that he would be "quite stiff about it here".<sup>2</sup>

The directives which Churchill gave to Beaverbrook on September 21 stated, above all, that he was to support in every way Russia's determination to continue resistance. Although it was admitted that eventual supplies would be very limited, it was found useful in London to stint no promise, particularly for a more distant future.

The U.S. Government, while preparing for the conference, proceeded from the assumption that war between the U.S. and Germany was inevitable. It believed that it was far more paying for the U.S. to supply military equipment to the U.S.S.R., so that the Soviet forces could undermine those of Germany, than to face the danger—in the event of the Soviet Union being crushed—of Britain and the U.S. having to fight the fascist bloc without actually any hope for a final victory.

In the U.S., the supporters of deliveries to the Soviet Union argued that it "does the fighting for us".<sup>3</sup> Hopkins believed the supplies to be "good business".<sup>4</sup> Roosevelt acted on the belief that "*American self-interest* demanded all-out aid to keep the Russians fighting".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Parkinson, *Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat*, pp.295, 301.

<sup>2</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. III, p.403.

<sup>3</sup> W. L. Langer and S. E. Gleason, *The Undeclared War*, p.812.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.667.

<sup>5</sup> W. A. Harriman and E. Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin. 1941-1946*, Random House, New York, 1975, p.108. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

At the same time, there were still quite a few personalities in the U.S. and Britain who were adamantly against cooperation with the U.S.S.R. and against any military supplies to it.

During the negotiations with Beaverbrook and Harriman, Stalin once again made a circumstantial review of the situation on the Soviet-German front, just as he had done in his discussions with Hopkins. That disproves, in particular, the contention, widespread in publications by British and American historians, that the Governments of Britain and the U.S. did not receive enough information about it. The head of the Soviet Government stated that what the U.S.S.R. needed most of all was tanks, but it also needed anti-tank guns, medium-range bombers, fighters and reconnaissance aircraft, anti-aircraft guns, armour, barbed wire and some other armaments and materials. Harriman said that the quantity of supplies the Soviet Union had asked for was moderate.

Soviet representatives suggested signing an official protocol on supplies at the end of the Conference. However, Harriman and Beaverbrook turned out to have been authorised to do no more than negotiate, without any right to assume any official obligations or to sign any agreements on supplies on behalf of the American and British Governments. In the end, they agreed to sign the Protocol of the Conference stating the results of the negotiations. But they never assumed any firm obligations with regard to supplies. The issue of payment for American supplies also remained unsettled.<sup>1</sup>

The minutes of the Conference of the representatives of the Three Powers said that they had arrived at the unanimous decision concerning the provision of supplies by Britain and the U.S. for the U.S.S.R., the purchase of which was to be made available at British and U.S. centres of production from October 1941 till the end of June 1942. Great Britain and the U.S. were to aid the transportation and delivery of these materials. The Protocol contained a list of the main items: 100 bombers and 300 fighters every month, 500 tanks (half of them, light), anti-aircraft guns, anti-tank guns, motor vehicles, field telephone apparatus, aluminium, tin, lead and some other types of armaments and materials. With regard to a number of

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<sup>1</sup> W. A. Harriman and E. Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941-1946*, p.97.

Soviet requests for supplies, representatives of the U.S. and Britain made reservations to the effect that the question would be further studied in Washington and London. Besides, at the end of the Protocol it was stated that "in the event of the war situation changing and the burden of defence being transferred to other theatres of war, it will be necessary for the three countries concerned to consult together, and to decide what adjustment of the present arrangement is necessary". The Soviet Government on its part declared its readiness to consider a request from the U.S. and Great Britain for the delivery of various materials and goods.<sup>1</sup>

That was the first Three-Power Agreement about actual cooperation. But the wording of the Protocol was very vague. Besides, those supplies could be of practical value only in the spring. Moreover, one cannot fail to note that the stipulated supplies were but a very small proportion of the military hardware that Soviet industry provided for the front. The summer and autumn of 1941 were the hardest time for the Soviet Union, yet it was getting virtually no supplies either from the U.S. or from Britain. The Soviet forces defeated the Blitzkrieg plans against the U.S.S.R. with Soviet arms.

The purchase of war materials by the Soviet Union in the U.S. was complicated, notably, by the fact that it was not yet settled financially. At first, the U.S.S.R. made its purchases on account of the deposits it had in American banks. Later on, the Soviet Government began shipping gold to the U.S. as payment. That is to say that in the opening stages, the U.S.S.R. paid in cash for all supplies.

In the meantime, the U.S. was supplying other countries up in arms against the fascist aggressors with military equipment and other materials on credit under the Lend-Lease Act of March 11, 1941, which provided for such supplies to any country if its defence against aggression was deemed "vital to the defense of the United States".

On October 10, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a Bill by 328 votes against 67 whereby the Lend-Lease Act could be extended to apply to the U.S.S.R. The U.S. granted an interest-free 1,000 million-dollar loan to the Soviet Union to pay for the supplies.<sup>2</sup> After that, Roosevelt ordered Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson to begin meeting the

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Supply Protocols*, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1945, pp.3-8.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. 1941*, Vol. 1, p.857.



Protocol provisions by January 1, 1942.<sup>1</sup> The British Government also announced its consent to make deliveries to the Soviet Union.

The Moscow Conference was the first Conference of representatives of the Three Powers in the Second World War. It played an appreciable role in the development of the allied relationship between the U.S.S.R., Britain and the U.S., uniting their efforts to defeat the common enemy. Deliveries of military hardware and other materials essential for the prosecution of the war became the basic form of practical cooperation of the U.S. and Britain with the Soviet Union during the war.

### THE SECOND FRONT ISSUE

Even the First World War made it quite clear that Germany, for all of her immense military-economic potential, was not in a position to win a war on two fronts. As they prepared for a new world war, the Nazis, considering the bitter experience of the 1918 defeat, felt they had to avoid fighting again on two fronts, as otherwise Germany would be in for another national disaster.

So, naturally, the best way to defeat Germany was by setting up two formidable fronts against her—in the East and in the West. After Nazi Germany had attacked the Soviet Union, she found herself in a state of war both in the East and in the West. As a matter of fact, however, the war raged only on one front—the Soviet-German front. The U.S.S.R. was fighting a heroic war single-handed, as a matter of fact, against Hitler Germany and her allies. The Soviet people were doing everything possible to beat back the aggressors.

However, the prevailing view in London, as I have already said, was that the Soviet Union would not hold out. And in that case, Britain's own fate would be sealed. Therefore, British statesmen were naturally wondering whether they should take any steps towards galvanising action in the West, notably on the European continent, so as to draw off some of the German strength from the Soviet-German front.

That was the view, for instance, of Aneurin Bevan. Speaking in the House of Commons on June 24, he suggested that something had to be done "to try to effect a second land

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<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 14, No. 3, July 1979, p.473.

front as an urgent necessity".<sup>1</sup> Lord Beaverbrook also considered it necessary to open a second front. In a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador in London, Ivan Maisky, on June 27, 1944, he listed a number of military measures which Britain could take to relieve pressure of Hitler Germany on the Eastern front. He referred to major raids on the northern coastline of France with a view to, at least, a temporary capture of such important strategic points as Le Havre or Cherbourg.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet Government, naturally, showed great interest in the measures mentioned by Beaverbrook because their implementation could ease, to some extent, the situation on the Soviet-German front.

Two days later, Molotov told Cripps that "the Soviet Government considers all of Beaverbrook's proposals to be right and opportune". He emphasised the desirability of an "all-round intensification of British Air Force action against Germany ... and also of a landing on the coast of France".<sup>3</sup> However, on July 1, the Foreign Office cabled to Cripps that Britain was not in a position, as it were, to render the U.S.S.R. military assistance.<sup>4</sup> But that did not prevent the British Ambassador from telling Molotov the following day that Britain was ready to lend the U.S.S.R. all possible support. British diplomacy found such gestures to be useful for reinforcing the Soviet Union's determination in the war.<sup>5</sup>

On July 18, 1941, that is after the Soviet-British agreement on joint action in the war against Germany had been signed, Stalin raised the question of a second front in his message to Churchill. He stated that the Soviet Union and Britain "have become fighting allies in the struggle against Hitler Germany". The military situation of the U.S.S.R., as well as that of Britain, the Soviet Head of Government stated, "would substantially improve if a front were estab-

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, Fifth Series, Vol. 372, House of Commons, Official Report, Sixth Volume of Session, 1940-1941, Printed and Published by His Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1941, Col. 993.

<sup>2</sup> *Anglo-Soviet Relations... Documents*, Vol. I, p. 53 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21.

<sup>4</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p.9. In connection with this telegram, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Alexander Cadogan pointed out in his diaries that the Germans being heavily engaged in Russia were "heaven-sent (and short) opportunity"; the British would "look awful fools" if they failed to take advantage of it, "but there is". (*The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, pp.390-391.)

<sup>5</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p.9.

lished against Hitler in the West (North France)". At the same time, that would make a German invasion of Britain impossible. "The easiest thing is to create such a front now when the German forces have been switched to the East..."<sup>1</sup>

However, the British Government did not intend to open a Second Front in Western Europe. Time went on and there was no progress at all on that issue. London was planning to continue a "passive" war in the years to come, a war of attrition, a war without any major ground forces involved. The idea was to move a greater proportion of the British forces to British colonial possessions. The task before them was not only to fight the German, Italian and Japanese imperialists, but also to suppress the national liberation movements and preserve and strengthen the British Empire. The ruling elite of Britain saw the preservation of her possessions, not the defeat of Germany, as a top priority.

That can be seen from the review known as "General Strategy", signed by the British Chiefs of Staff on July 31, 1941. "The strength and duration of Russian resistance still remain in doubt," the document said; should the Russian resistance be prolonged into the autumn, the threat of invasion of Britain would recede for this year, and it might be possible safely to release more of British forces for other tasks. That implied giving more attention, primarily, to the Middle East since the loss of Britain's position in that area "would have disastrous effects". The British Chiefs of Staff decided that Britain would continue the war by former ways and means: blockade, bombing, subversive activities and propaganda. The document expressed the hope that, as a result of such action, Germany would have to cease the hostilities, and the role of the British Army on the Continent would be limited to occupation functions. However, the review pointed out, it was also necessary to prepare for landing forces on the Continent "to destroy any elements of the German forces which still resist". The intention was not to create vast armies of infantry, as in 1914-1918, but to form "armoured divisions with the most modern equipment".

On the whole, the review said nothing about Germany's military defeat but maintained that the whole task was to

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. and the Presidents of the United States and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1957, p.19.

"bring Germany to her knees". Great hopes were reposed on the United States entering the war.<sup>1</sup>

As far as the projected landing on the Continent was concerned, British politicians, considered it hardly probable within the space of three years, i.e., up to 1944. Besides, that landing was by no means contemplated as the opening of a second front for major hostilities which the U.S.S.R. had been insisting on, but was to have only one purpose, as a matter of fact, that of accepting Germany's surrender.

Although the U.S.S.R. was Britain's Ally in the war, the Churchill Government showed no desire to coordinate military operations with it or establish effective cooperation in the struggle against the common foe. No changes were made after June 22, 1941, in Britain's earlier grand strategy.

During his meeting with Roosevelt in August 1941, Churchill decided to concert with him his strategy for the prosecution of the war. The British military strategic plans set out above were communicated to the Americans. However, Roosevelt avoided taking any decisions on military issues at that meeting.

The American military authorities formulated their strategic plans on September 11, 1941, in a document called the "Programme of Victory". It considered Germany, Japan, Italy and their allies to be potential military adversaries of the United States. The British Commonwealth of Nations, China, Russia, as well as some countries of the Western Hemisphere were listed as friendly nations. It was presumed that should Germany be successful in conquering all of Europe, she might try and conquer South America as well and "inflict a military defeat on the United States". Therefore, American military quarters considered the "complete military defeat of Germany" indispensable. But they had no idea, *as a matter of fact*, of how to bring that about since they realised that "only land armies can finally win wars".<sup>2</sup> The American military establishment considered it necessary to use some of the U.S. Armed Forces for offensive operations in Europe together with other opponents of Germany, but not in the foreseeable future. Therefore, their immediate intention upon entering the war was to act, as a matter of fact, by the same ineffective ways and means as the British.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 99/18.

<sup>2</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp.411-417.

Their policy on the U.S.S.R. was dictated by the following considerations: "The maintenance of an active front in Russia offers by far the best opportunity for a successful land offensive against Germany, because only Russia possesses adequate manpower, situated in favourable proximity to the centre of German military power. For Russia, ground and aviation forces are most important. Predictions as to the result of the present conflict in Russia are premature. However, were the Soviet forces to be driven even beyond the Ural Mountains and were they there to continue an organized resistance, there would always remain the hope of a final and complete defeat of Germany by land operations."<sup>1</sup>

That is to say, U.S. military quarters proceeded, as a matter of fact, from the assumption that the complete defeat of Germany was impossible without the participation of the U.S.S.R. Only the Soviet forces were considered to be eventually capable of playing the major role in defeating Germany's ground forces. All that largely determined the attitude of U.S. military quarters towards the Soviet Union in the context of their plans for the prosecution of the war against Germany. True, they were still in doubt whether the Soviet Union would hold out in the face of the German offensive.

American military authorities presumed that following the victory over Germany, Japan would probably have to renounce many of her territorial acquisitions. But they did grant the possibility of her positions being strengthened to such an extent that the U.S. and its Allies "could not afford the energy to continue the war against her".<sup>2</sup> In consequence, the U.S. did not actually see how it could win the war over Japan either.

A fortnight later, with further details worked out, U.S. military authorities presented their considerations to Roosevelt regarding the strategic plans for the prosecution of the war. The U.S. intended to create an army more than eight million strong. Of them, five million were to be shipped across the seas. Yet it was announced that American forces would not be ready for major action before July 1, 1943.<sup>3</sup>

American plans called for the U.S. to get fully involved in the hostilities when the other belligerents had worn out

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<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp.411-417.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.415.

<sup>3</sup> Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, Department of the Army, Washington, 1953, p.60.

their forces enough for American troops to play the crucial part in defeating the aggressor bloc. Those plans conceded the significance of the struggle which the Soviet forces were waging against Germany, but no concerted military action by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. was envisaged. Washington saw the military operations conducted by the U.S.S.R. as, in fact, nothing but a favourable objective factor. The U.S. Government was planning to use its huge land, air and naval forces to establish its domination of the post-war world.

However, those were essentially plans to be carried out when the U.S. actually got involved in the war. The task before the Soviet Union at the time was still to establish closer cooperation with Britain in the war.

Whereas the U.S. was informed of the war plans of the British Empire, the Soviet Union had no official information to that effect, although it was already, both nominally and actually, its war-time Ally. Moreover, the Churchill Government was most carefully withholding its strategic plans from the U.S.S.R., quite often trying even to mislead the Soviet Government. The main thing was, however, that while the Soviet Army was fighting fierce and sanguinary battles, wearing out Germany's major forces, British troops were still avoiding any major action against Germany.

Referring to the situation that had thus developed, the Soviet Ambassador in London stated in his conversation with Anthony Eden on August 26 that "Britain is at the present moment not so much our ally and comrade-in-arms in the life-and-death struggle against Hitler Germany, as a sympathising spectator".<sup>1</sup>

In his message of September 3 to Churchill, Stalin informed him that the Nazis had moved between 30 and 34 fresh infantry divisions as well as huge tank and air forces to the Eastern front; besides, the 20 Finnish and 26 Romanian divisions had become considerably more active. In consequence, the Soviet Union lost more than half the Ukraine and the enemy stood at the approaches to Leningrad. The head of the Soviet Government once more raised the question, in that context, of opening the Second Front which could divert between 30 and 40 German divisions from the Eastern front.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Anglo-Soviet Relations... Documents*, Vol. I, p.106 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence ...*, Vol. I, pp.26-27.

British Ambassador Sir Stafford Cripps pointed out in his cable to London that Stalin's message had been prompted by British inactivity. He stated that the British considered the "Russian war" not as their own, but as an alien war in which they wanted to help just as much as not to make it too heavy a burden for themselves. Replying to Sir Stafford Cripps, Churchill argued, however, that nothing that Britain "could do or could have done would affect the struggle on the Eastern front" or "the agony of Russia".<sup>1</sup>

In a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador to Britain who handed him a message from Stalin, Churchill admitted that the Soviet people had been fighting against Germany single-handed for eleven weeks with nothing but insignificant support from the British Air Force, and that Hitler's whole design was to destroy his enemies one by one. But Churchill asserted again that an invasion of France was impossible.

As a matter of fact, only one Minister in the British War Cabinet, Lord Beaverbrook, spoke up emphatically for an immediate invasion of the Continent. He had no doubt that should the German forces be successful on the Eastern front, the days of the British Empire would be numbered. Beaverbrook was a man of action and he considered it necessary to do everything possible to save the Empire. The best way to do so at the moment was to prevent Germany from defeating the Soviet Union. Therefore, he was pressing both for military supplies to the Soviet Union and for a harder war effort by Britain herself, and, among other things, for the opening of the Second Front.

Soon after his return from Moscow, on October 19, 1941, Lord Beaverbrook presented a memorandum to the War Cabinet. It was called "Assistance to Russia!". "Since the start of the German campaign against Russia our military leaders have shown themselves consistently averse to taking any offensive action... Our strategy is still based on a long-term view of the war which is blind to the urgencies and opportunities of the moment. There has been no attempt to take into account the new factor introduced by Russian resistance... Russian resistance has given us new opportunities. It has probably denuded Western Europe of German troops and prevented for the time being offensive action by the Axis

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<sup>1</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. III, pp. 409, 410.

powers in other theatres of possible operations. It has created a quasi-revolutionary situation in every occupied country and opened 2,000 miles of coastline to a descent by British forces... The Chiefs of Staff would have us wait until the last button has been sewn on the last gaiter before we launch an attack."<sup>1</sup>

When the Memorandum came before the Defence Committee on the following day, Beaverbrook's plea turned out to be a voice in the wilderness. The official Minutes of the meeting are indicative:

He wished to take advantage of the rising temper in the country for helping Russia. Others didn't. He wanted to make a supreme effort so as to raise production to help Russia. Others didn't. He wanted to fulfil in every particular the Agreement made in Moscow. Others didn't. He wished the Army to act in support of Russia. The Chiefs of Staff didn't. The line of cleavage between himself and his colleagues and the COS was complete. Churchill said he was sorry to hear this statement, which he must of course regard as an attack on himself.<sup>2</sup>

Britain held on to her passive stand. In yet another message to the British Premier, the Soviet Head of Government stated that the absence of a Second Front "is playing into the hands of our common enemies".<sup>3</sup> Considering the situation, the Soviet Government stopped raising the issue of a Second Front in Europe. The U.S.S.R. kept up, single-handed, as a matter of fact, its titanic struggle against Hitler Germany and her allies in the aggression.

### CHURCHILL—A DUBIOUS ALLY

The situation on the Soviet-German Front had sharply deteriorated. On September 30, 1941, German troops launched yet another full-scale offensive with the aim of capturing Moscow (Operation Typhoon). It involved some 74 divisions, including 14 armoured and 8 motorised divisions, with a total of 1,800,000 men, over 14,000 guns and mortars, 1,700 tanks, and 1,390 aircraft.

The opposing Soviet forces had 1,250,000 men, 7,600 guns and mortars, 990 tanks, 677 aircraft.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. J. P. Taylor, *Beaverbrook*, p.495.

<sup>2</sup> Roger Parkinson, *Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat*, p. 301.

<sup>3</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 4, pp. 92, 93 (in Russian).



With that great superiority in strength, German troops breached the frontline and started to advance in several directions. That created an extremely precarious situation fraught with the danger of a German breakthrough to Moscow.

The situation was so dangerous that some government offices were urgently evacuated from Moscow in mid-October. The British, American and other diplomatic missions left Moscow for Kuibyshev on October 16. Stalin and other Soviet leaders stayed on, taking all possible steps for the defence of the nation's capital.

Because of the extremely precarious situation on the frontlines, the continued inactivity of the British Ally was quite a painful issue for the Soviet Union. Over three months after Germany's attack on the U.S.S.R., Britain actually remained a paper ally. Moreover, she turned out to be an ally that inspired suspicion rather than confidence. The reactionary British press went on playing up the allegation that the British Empire had found itself involved in the "wrong war" because in the war between Germany (a capitalist State) and the Soviet Union (a socialist State) it was on the latter's side.

A modern student of the history of the Second World War would hardly associate it automatically with the events of the First World War, the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Civil War and foreign armed intervention against Russia. But in 1941 to the statesmen of the Soviet Union and Britain, they were all links of one chain. Past events called quite a few things to mind. For in the First World War, Russia was Britain's ally too. But as soon as Kaiser's Germany surrendered in November 1918, that is, no longer posed a danger to the British Empire, Churchill turned out to be one of those leaders of the Triple Alliance who were most vocal in pressing for German troops to be used to suppress the Soviet system of government in Russia. Churchill was the main organiser of the notorious 14-nation crusade in 1919 and of the British intervention in particular. He mouthed the infamous statement that the Soviet Republic "must be strangled at birth". Now, although neither Churchill nor any other of the world's reactionaries ever succeeded in "strangling" the newborn Soviet State, they did reap some "dividends" through German action against Soviet government. German troops, on demand and under instructions from the Entente and the U.S., crushed the Soviet order in the Baltic lands through unrestrained White terror, and

established the reactionary bourgeois States of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia alien to their peoples' aspirations.<sup>1</sup>

And quite naturally, in 1941 the Soviet leaders could not rule out the possibility of British imperialists, Churchill in particular, pursuing the same course for their general class objectives had not changed. One could well see that from many aspects of the Churchill Government's policy after Germany's attack on the U.S.S.R., notably from its reluctance to conclude a bona fide treaty of alliance and recognise the Soviet Western borders as they existed on the day of Nazi Germany's invasion, or to open a Second Front. Anthony Eden pointed out in his memoirs that many times during the Second World War he could see that Soviet leaders had not forgotten about the British intervention in 1918-1919. They would often remind Churchill about it.<sup>2</sup>

That is why, one of the top priorities of the Soviet Government was an official Treaty of Alliance with Great Britain, which could keep it from switching front one day. The U.S.S.R. wanted some of the most important issues of relations between the two nations to be simultaneously settled to strengthen their war-time cooperation and dispel mistrust.

Since it was quite obvious that Britain was not in a hurry to open a Second Front, Stalin, writing to Churchill on September 13, suggested the dispatch of 25-30 British divisions to the Soviet-German front. Even Sir Stafford Cripps communicated to London that the Russians had been upset by the Nazi propaganda claim that Britain was "prepared to fight to the last drop of Russian blood".<sup>3</sup>

Churchill decided to teach Sir Stafford Cripps a lesson of "big-time politics". He cabled to him on October 28 to say that he fully sympathised with him in his "difficult position, and also with Russia in her agony". But the Russians, he said, "have no right to reproach us". "They," he claimed, "brought their own fate upon themselves." So Russia's possible reproaches did not "disturb" him.<sup>4</sup>

On receiving that revelation of Churchill's, Cripps asked early in November 1941, to be relieved of his duties

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<sup>1</sup> For details see: Vilnis Sipols, *Behind the Scenes of the Foreign Intervention in Latvia, 1918-1920*, Moscow, 1959 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *The Memoirs of Anthony Eden. The Reckoning*, p.323.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Barker, *Churchill and Eden at War*, Macmillan Ltd., London, 1978, p.234.

<sup>4</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. III, pp.420-421.

as Ambassador in Moscow.<sup>1</sup> He considered it necessary for the U.S.S.R. and Britain to cooperate in the war, but, in view of Churchill's stance, he found his continued presence in Moscow useless.

On November 8, Stalin sent a message to Churchill in which he most earnestly urged an overhaul of Soviet-British relations. Stalin wrote: "...We need clarity, which at the moment is lacking in relations between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain. The unclarity is due to two circumstances: first, there is no definite understanding between our two countries concerning war aims and plans for the post-war organisation of peace; secondly, there is no treaty between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain on mutual military aid in Europe against Hitler. Until understanding is reached on these two main points, not only will there be no clarity in Anglo-Soviet relations, but, if we are to speak frankly, there will be no mutual trust."

Stalin expressed his displeasure with the British Government's rejection of the Soviet proposal for Britain to declare war on Finland, Hungary and Romania, and with the polemics on that subject in the British press.

Finally, he referred to the initial British military supplies: "... The tanks, guns and aircraft are badly packed, some parts of the guns come in different ships and the aircraft are so badly crated that we get them in a damaged state."<sup>2</sup>

The message was discussed at the British War Cabinet meeting on November 11. It was found to be impudent. Churchill acted the offended. He did not reply to Stalin's message for a whole fortnight. Yet the message had its effect.

The head of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office, Christopher Warner, prepared a special memo in connection with Stalin's message in which he emphasised: "We need their collaboration in various fields, e.g. Persia and Afghanistan, and, more still, in case of war against Japan, or if the Germans stabilise in Russia and turn against us. It seems therefore that we should do what we can to allay their suspicions, even if we cannot meet their wishes." At the same time, Warner considered that it was necessary to put off negotiations with the Soviet Government about the war aims.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p.45.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, pp.33-34.

<sup>3</sup> Public Record Office, FO 371/29471/6242.

Cripps was also worried. He proposed that Anthony Eden and the Chiefs of Staff of the British Armed Forces should arrive in Moscow to negotiate with Stalin.<sup>1</sup> He cabled to London again to say that he did not wish to remain in Moscow if he could "do nothing useful towards the solution of major difficulties now outstanding between the two countries".<sup>2</sup> Replying to Cripps on November 17, Eden wrote that in the event of any improvement in Anglo-Soviet relations, he was prepared to go to Moscow in a few weeks. But he pointed out that for the time being, the Government was not in a position to see clearly what course the developments would take and what problems would arise. The British were prepared to negotiate on the issues raised by the Soviet Government, but they could neither accept, nor decline its proposals. Besides, the British position had to be squared with the American.<sup>3</sup>

That is to say that the British Government was prepared to send Eden to Moscow but for no more than reassuring discussions, as a matter of fact. The issue of British Chiefs of Staff going to Moscow was passed over.

In the meantime, the situation on the approaches to Moscow became increasingly critical. In mid-November, the German army started yet another offensive. The Soviet forces continued their stiff resistance.

In those circumstances, Churchill finally sent a message to Stalin on November 22 couched in conciliatory terms. It said: "Our intention is to fight the war, in alliance with you and in constant consultation with you, to the utmost of our strength and however long it lasts, and when the war is won, as I am sure it will be, we expect that Soviet Russia, Great Britain and the U.S.A. will meet at the council table of victory as the three principal partners and as the agencies by which Nazism will have been destroyed. Naturally, the first object will be to prevent Germany, and particularly Prussia, from breaking out upon us for a third time. The fact that Russia is a Communist State and that Britain and the U.S.A. are not and do not intend to be is not any obstacle to our making a good plan for our mutual safety and rightful interests." Churchill announced that he was prepared to

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, FO 371/29471/6242.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

delegate Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden to Moscow shortly to discuss "the whole of this field".<sup>1</sup>

On the following day, Stalin accepted those considerations and said it was desirable for Mr. Eden to come to Moscow. "I also agree," he wrote, "that difference in political system in the U.S.S.R., on the one hand, and of Great Britain and the U.S.A., on the other, should not and cannot be an obstacle to a favourable solution of the fundamental issues of ensuring our mutual security and rightful interests."<sup>2</sup>

However, all that Churchill said in his message was very far from the actual track he was on. He wrote something entirely different to Eden: "No one can foresee how the balance of power will lie or where the winning armies will stand at the end of the war. It seems probable, however, that the United States and the British Empire, far from being exhausted, will be the most powerfully armed economic bloc the world has ever seen, and that the Soviet Union will need our aid for reconstruction..."<sup>3</sup> Churchill actually meant that a powerful Anglo-American bloc would decide post-war affairs, with the U.S.S.R. on the side-lines.

One of the questions of fundamental importance was settled, nevertheless, in the course of that correspondence. Finland, Romania and Hungary attacked the Soviet Union together with Germany. However, the British Government, in spite of repeated Soviet demands, decided on September 15, 1941, not to declare war on Romania and Hungary, and limit itself to a warning to Finland in the sense that her continued invasion of Russia could lead to Britain declaring war on her and to unfavourable consequences at the time of peaceful settlement.<sup>4</sup> Churchill held a particularly hostile position on the matter as regards the Soviet Union. However, Stalin's strong-worded message of November 8 had its effect. On December 5, on the eve of Eden's departure for Moscow, Britain declared war on Finland, Romania and Hungary.

### THE U.S.S.R. AND THE GOVERNMENTS IN EXILE

Following the start of hostilities between Germany and the U.S.S.R. the peoples of the European countries occupied

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p.35.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.44-45.

<sup>3</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. III, p.616.

<sup>4</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/19.

by fascist aggressors came to look upon the Soviet Union as their only hope for liberation. All progressive forces of those countries were determined to make their own contribution towards driving out the invaders. There was an appreciable stepping up of the struggle for national liberation in Nazi-occupied countries.

The liberation struggle in Yugoslavia developed with particular intensity. On July 4, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia resolved to launch a nation-wide armed uprising. Soon afterwards, the Communist-led uprising spread through vast areas of the country and assumed the character of an outright partisan war. The national liberation movement was mounting in Poland, Czechoslovakia and other countries.

The Soviet Government was keen on developing contact with the Governments in exile. It considered that as one of the means by which to rally the forces of all nations and peoples in battle against the fascist aggressors. The Soviet Government's position of principle regarding the destiny of a number of German-occupied States was set forth as early as July 3, 1941, in a message to the Soviet Ambassador in London, which said:

"a) We stand for the creation of an independent Polish State within the frontiers of national Poland... Moreover, the Soviet Government considers that it is up to the Poles themselves to determine the political system of Poland;

"b) We also stand for the restoration of the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav States on the understanding that in those States, too, the political system is to be decided as a matter of their own domestic competence."<sup>1</sup>

The London-based Governments in exile were informed of the Soviet position.

An Agreement was signed between the Governments of the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia in London on July 18, 1941, providing for the resumption of diplomatic relations and mutual assistance in the war against Germany.<sup>2</sup> An agreement about Czechoslovak military units being formed on the territory of the U.S.S.R. was concluded in Moscow on

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents and Records on the History of Soviet-Polish Relations* (hereinafter—*Documents ... on Soviet-Polish Relations*, Vol. 7, Moscow, 1973, p.198 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Soviet-Czechoslovak Relations During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. Documents and Records* (hereinafter—*Soviet-Czechoslovak Relations ... Documents*), Moscow, 1960, p.14 (in Russian).

September 27. The Soviet Government provided the necessary facilities for that.

Negotiations got under way also between representatives of the U.S.S.R. and the London-based Polish Government in exile headed by General Sikorski. They came up, however, against serious difficulties because representatives of that Government insisted on the Soviet Union turning over to Poland, after the end of the war, the Western regions of the Ukraine and Byelorussia which had been seized by Poland during the armed intervention of 1920, but were reincorporated in the U.S.S.R. in 1939. Because of those imperialist claims of Polish reaction the talks dragged on. The Soviet Ambassador in London, Ivan Maisky, said in his reminiscences: "Although Sikorski seemed to represent a somewhat different variety of Polish militarism than the notorious 'colonels' who had brought pre-war Poland to destruction, he and his entourage acted in a pronounced aggressive and imperialist spirit."<sup>1</sup>

The talks ended on July 30, 1941, in the signing of an Agreement in London between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government in exile, re-establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. "Both Governments", the Agreement said, "mutually undertake to render aid and support of every kind to each other in the present war against Hitler Germany." The U.S.S.R. expressed its consent to a Polish army being created on its territory to operate under the Supreme Command of the U.S.S.R.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet Government showed interest in establishing cooperation also with the Free French Movement led by General de Gaulle. There was an exchange of letters between the Soviet Ambassador in London, Ivan Maisky, and Charles de Gaulle on September 26, 1941. The Soviet Government recognised de Gaulle "as the leader of all the Free French wherever they may be", who had rallied behind him. It expressed its readiness to "lend assistance and help of every kind to the Free French in the common struggle against Hitler Germany and her allies". On his part, de Gaulle pledged himself to "fight on the side of the U.S.S.R. and its Allies until the final victory over the common foe".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ivan Maisky, *Reminiscences of a Soviet Diplomat, 1925-1945* Moscow, 1971, p.536 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Documents... on Soviet-Polish Relations*, Vol. 7, p.208.

<sup>3</sup> *Soviet-French Relations During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. Documents and Records* (hereinafter—*Soviet-French Relations ... Documents*), Moscow, 1959, pp.47-48 (in Russian).

## RELATIONS WITH SOUTHERN NEIGHBOURS

A serious situation had developed on the Soviet Union's border with its southern neighbours—Turkey and Iran—by June 1941.

Germany's attack on the U.S.S.R. was welcomed by the ruling circles of Turkey. They began to contemplate grabbing some Soviet lands. As the German Ambassador to Turkey von Papen communicated to Berlin on August 5, 1941, Turkish governing quarters, just as in 1918, wanted to seize Azerbaijan and, more particularly, the Baku oil-fields. "As to the Eastern Turki peoples apart from those inhabiting Azerbaijan, i.e. Turkis of the Volga, Tatars, Turkmen, etc., the present-day plans of Turkish governing quarters boil down to uniting those Turkis into their own, outwardly independent Eastern-Turki State in which the Western Turks would, however, play the decisive political and cultural role of 'advisers'.<sup>1</sup>

From July 1941 onwards, Turkey began to let German and Italian warships (including submarines), which were used against the Soviet Black Sea Fleet, through the Straits into the Black Sea, in defiance of the terms of the Montreux Convention of 1936.<sup>2</sup>

Reports in the press said that as soon as German forces got into Moscow, Turkey would join Germany in the war against the U.S.S.R. There was an intense build-up of Turkish troops near the Soviet border.

The situation on the Soviet border with Iran was also involved. The Nazis succeeded in infiltrating thousands of their advisers, instructors and other agents into Iran's government and economic institutions, and smuggled their spies and wreckers into that country for action against the U.S.S.R. and the British Empire. Reza Shah Pahlevi, who expected the fascist aggressors to win the war, was siding with them ever more openly. There was serious ground for believing him capable of entering the war at short notice, thereby turning Iran into a satellite of Germany.

On June 27, Sir Stafford Cripps discussed with Vyacheslav Molotov the idea of cooperation between Britain and the

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany*, Second Issue, *German Policy in Turkey (1941-1943)*, Moscow, 1946, pp.34, 36 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *The U.S.S.R. and Turkey, 1917-1979*, Moscow, 1981, p.171 (in Russian).



U.S.S.R. in the Middle East.<sup>1</sup> The Soviet and British diplomatic representatives made several representations to the Iranian Government insisting on Iran expelling the Germans who were engaged in activities damaging to the interests of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and Iran proper. However, Reza Shah Pahlevi kept on collaborating with Germany.

Considering the fundamental importance that issue had for the outcome of the war, the British Government found it necessary to take more effective action. On August 21, the British War Cabinet decided on "military action" if the U.S.S.R. declared itself ready to join it.<sup>2</sup> Several British and Soviet divisions entered the territory of Iran on August 25.

Following negotiations a tripartite Soviet-Anglo-Iranian Agreement was signed in Tehran on September 8, 1941. It indicated the agreed zones of dislocation of Soviet and British troops on the territory of Iran. The Iranian Government undertook to expel the German, Italian, Romanian and Hungarian missions. In their turn, the Soviet and British Governments undertook to assist Iran in meeting her economic needs.<sup>3</sup>

By their joint action, the U.S.S.R. and Britain prevented Iran from being turned into a German bridgehead. The Nazi Government could no longer use Iranian oil in the war.

### THE SOVIET UNION AND MILITARIST JAPAN

One point of major importance to the Soviet Union because of Germany's attack was the stance of militarist Japan. The implacable hostility of Japan's ruling quarters towards the Soviet State was notorious. Everybody remembered perfectly well the Japanese invasion of the Soviet Far East in 1918-1922. Nor could one overlook the preparations for attacking the U.S.S.R., which Japanese imperialists had been making after their seizure of North-East China (Manchuria) in 1931, or the Japanese acts of aggression in the area of Lake Khasan in 1938 and by the Khalkhin-Gol River in 1939. The Soviet Government knew about the decision taken by the Japanese Government in the summer of 1939:

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/19.

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/23; Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. III, pp. 423, 424.

<sup>3</sup> *Pravda*, September 12, 1941.

in the event of Germany going to war against the U.S.S.R., Japan would automatically be ready to take part in it.<sup>1</sup>

On July 5, 1941, Japan's Minister of War Tojo Hideki endorsed the plan of war against the U.S.S.R. The Japanese Command intended to destroy the Soviet air bases in the Far East by a sudden air-raid and, with air supremacy thus gained, to strike hard at the Primorye (Maritime) provinces, break through to Vladivostok and, in cooperation with the Navy, capture that naval base. The next thing was to take possession of Khabarovsk, Blagoveshchensk and other areas of the Far East. Special army and naval groups were to seize North Sakhalin and Kamchatka.<sup>2</sup> By the autumn of 1941, the Japanese forces in Manchuria (the Kwantung Army) were 700,000 strong.<sup>3</sup>

Tokyo was in no doubt whether to attack the U.S.S.R., although the Soviet Union and Japan had concluded a Neutrality Pact. What the Japanese ruling circles were divided on was the best time for that attack to be carried out. Japanese Foreign Minister Yosuke Matsuoka, President of the Privy Council Yoshinichi Hara, and some of the military pressed for an immediate attack. As early as June 22, Matsuoka submitted a Memorandum to the Emperor saying that Japan must join efforts with Germany and attack the Soviet Union. Hara declared at the Emperor's conference on July 2: "I beseech the Government and the Supreme Command to attack the Soviet Union as soon as possible. The Soviet Union must be destroyed."<sup>4</sup>

However, another section of Japan's ruling establishment considered that the Japanese would achieve appreciably greater success with far lesser effort, if they continued their aggression in China and southward. On July 2, the Emperor's Conference adopted a decision on Japanese policy in the changed circumstances. Japan was to "make efforts towards resolving the conflict in China" and to "continue the advance South". On Japanese policy towards the U.S.S.R. it was said: "Although our attitude to the German-Soviet war reposes on the spirit of the Three-Power Axis, we shall not interfere in it at the present time and we shall maintain

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D, (1937-1945), Vol. VI, *The Last Months of Peace: March-August 1939*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London 1956, p.656.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Second World War* vol. 4, pp.251-252 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.252.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.244.

our independent position while secretly completing our war preparations against the Soviet Union... If the German-Soviet war develops in a sense favourable for the Empire, the latter, resorting to armed force, will resolve the Northern problem."<sup>1</sup> That means that should Nazi Germany be successful on the Eastern front, the Japanese imperialists intended, having attacked the U.S.S.R., to capture the Soviet Far East and Siberia.

In the situation that had thus developed, Soviet diplomacy took steps to ascertain Japan's position. On July 12, the Soviet Ambassador to Japan, K. A. Smetanin, asked Matsuoka for an explanation. The Japanese Minister handed him a memo pointing out that the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact "remains in force although it is inapplicable to the German-Soviet War". The Pact remained valid as long as it did not run counter to the Tripartite Pact between Japan, Germany and Italy. "Japan will hold such a position," the memo said, "which will leave her ... free to shape her own policy."<sup>2</sup>

The general meaning of the Japanese Memorandum was that Japan did not consider herself bound by the commitments under the Neutrality Pact with the U.S.S.R. and proposed to act as she deemed necessary. That meant that the Soviet Government, which had to reckon with the danger of a Japanese attack, was not only unable to move Soviet troops from the Far East to the Soviet-German front but had to reinforce them.

The most trying opening stage of the Great Patriotic War was almost over. By early December 1941, Germany found herself in no position to continue the offensive. The Soviet forces, in stout defensive fighting, inflicted such heavy damage on the forward-pressing German war machine and knocked so much of hostile manpower and military hardware out of action as to cause that machine to skid. Hitler's Blitzkrieg plans fell through.

The object of Soviet foreign policy was to create the best possible external conditions for the selfless struggle that the Soviet forces were waging. That was not an easy thing to do when the U.S.S.R. was ringed by capitalist states on all sides. But the Nazi plan to force the Soviet Union into

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the War in the Pacific*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1958, pp. 379, 380 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> L. N. Kutakov, *History of Soviet-Japanese Diplomatic Relations*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 307-308 (in Russian).

isolation proved futile. Since the Soviet Union was drawn into the war only after it had already begun between the two imperialist groups, it found itself fighting in common with Great Britain and the United States of America. The Soviet Government was doing everything possible to expand and strengthen Three-Power cooperation. At the same time, Soviet involvement in the war against Hitler Germany was of tremendous importance to Britain and the U.S.

However, there were essential differences in the position and attitudes of these three Powers. It was the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union alone that really fought effectively against the German troops. "The situation is now such," Stalin stated in his speech on November 6, 1941, "that our country is waging a war of liberation alone, without anybody's military aid, against the combined forces of the Germans, Finns, Romanians, Italians and Hungarians", with the industries of France, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, and the Netherlands working for Hitler's war machine. He stressed that the German Army's position was considerably facilitated by the "absence of a Second Front against the Germans in Europe", but expressed the hope that a Second Front would be opened which would make things much easier for the Soviet forces.

In setting out the tasks before the Soviet Union, Stalin said that the prime objective was to liberate the Soviet lands and the Soviet people from German occupation, and to liberate the captive nations of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

To accomplish those tasks, the Soviet Government deemed it necessary to expand the cooperation of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and other nations in battle against the fascist bloc.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 1, pp.36, 41-42 (in Russian).

## **Chapter II**

### **THREE-POWER COALITION FORMED**

#### **INTERNATIONAL IMPORT OF THE GERMAN DEFEAT AT MOSCOW**

On December 5 and 6, 1941, the Red Army launched a counter-offensive at Moscow. The German forces had by then been well worn out by its stiff resistance. They had none of their previous fighting capacity any longer. At the same time, trainloads of troops and arms were streaming towards Moscow in growing numbers from many parts of the country, including Siberia. By early January 1942, the Soviet forces, having smashed the strike units of a major German army group attacking Moscow, drove the enemy 100-250 kilometres back from Moscow.

The smash-up of the German forces outside Moscow and the Soviet counter-offensive signified the complete failure of the German plans to overrun the U.S.S.R. by yet another Blitzkrieg. The Soviet forces pressed the Hitler invaders south-east of Leningrad and on the southern flank of the Soviet-German front, notably at Rostov-on-Don, barring their way to the Caucasus.

The defeat of German forces outside Moscow and in other sectors of the Soviet-German Front marked a major turning point in the war.

The victory of Soviet forces at Moscow was one of tremendous international political significance. The Germans sustained their first major defeat since the outbreak of the Second World War which had been going on for over two years. It was proved in actual fact that the war machine of the German Reich was by no means "invincible", as Hitler's propaganda shouted from all rooftops for the whole world to hear. The halo of "invincibility" was ripped off. The Soviet Army showed that German forces could not only be stopped, but pushed back. Germany, which hoped for a victory over the U.S.S.R. through a Blitzkrieg, found herself bogged down in a protracted war. Besides, the bal-

ance of forces on the Soviet-German Front was changing from month to month to the Reich's disadvantage.

Western spokesmen used to play down the Soviet Union's achievements in building a Socialist society, and it was written about as a "giant with feet of clay" or the "sick man of Europe", and after Hitler Germany's attack it was said to have its days numbered, the victory at Moscow made it abundantly clear to the peoples and governments of the world that it was the U.S.S.R. that had proved capable of stopping the seemingly unvanquishable Nazi war machine and forced it to retreat.

That went far towards raising the international prestige of the U.S.S.R. The peoples of the Nazi-occupied countries, the nations who were fighting against the aggressors, and the peoples who shuddered at the thought of being attacked before long, all saw a hope for salvation. London and Washington, although still underestimating the potentialities of the Soviet Union, began to look at it differently. Britain and the U.S. came to regard the U.S.S.R. as a powerful force and an important ally in the war. The victory at Moscow contributed thereby towards strengthening the alliance of the U.S.S.R., Britain and the U.S. and towards uniting their effort in the battle against the bloc of fascist aggressors.

In mid-December, Churchill cabled to Stalin:

"I cannot tell you how relieved I am to learn daily about your remarkable victories on the Russian front. I have never felt so confident of the outcome of the war."<sup>1</sup>

The alliance with the U.S.S.R. had by then acquired a totally different meaning to the U.S. as well because, following the Japanese attack of December 7, 1941, the U.S. found itself involved in the world war.<sup>2</sup> A few days later, Germany and Italy also declared war on the United States. Since, however, the U.S. was separated from Germany and Japan by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, it had no reason to fear an attack upon its own territory for years. So the war did not pose so immense and direct a danger to the U.S. as it did to many other nations.

One specific feature of the situation in the Far East was that the U.S. and Britain were at war with Japan, while

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p.37.

<sup>2</sup> There had been an "undeclared war" between Japan and China for several years, following the Japanese aggression. On December 9, 1941, China officially declared itself to be at war with Japan.

the Soviet Union remained outside that war. The Soviet Government could afford to bring up some of its troops from the Far East, notably for the defence of Moscow and the counter-offensive that had got under way.

With the U.S. entering the war on the side of the Soviet Union, Britain and their Allies, the balance and alignment of forces in the world war changed essentially. The U.S.S.R. now had the world's strongest capitalist Power as its new ally. True, in the opening stages of the war, the U.S. suffered setback upon setback in the Pacific. Much of the U.S. Pacific Fleet was wiped out in the Japanese surprise attack on the American naval base in Pearl Harbour. But the U.S. was just beginning to build up its military strength. Subsequently, its contribution to the war against the common foe could greatly increase.

### EDEN IN MOSCOW

It was an important point of principle for Soviet diplomacy to have the incipient alliance between the U.S.S.R. Britain and the U.S. formalised as a Treaty. That would strengthen the conviction that Britain and the U.S. would be with the U.S.S.R. all through the war, i.e. they would not oppose it at any stage of the war. Since there was extremely hostile feeling towards the Soviet Union in the governing quarters of those Powers, the possibility of events taking such a course could not be overlooked. The conclusion of an alliance ought, in the Soviet Government's opinion, to have also created optimal opportunities for effective cooperation of the three Powers in the war and for coordinating and concerting their action for an early possible defeat of the common enemies. It was likewise necessary to concert the war objectives of the three Powers and to settle outstanding international political issues. Considering the bitter experience of the interrelationship between the three countries in earlier years, the Soviet Government showed immense interest also in having the cooperation which had been established between them during the war years maintained after the war was over.

In order to iron out the differences which had arisen between Britain and the U.S.S.R., the British Government decided that Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden should make a trip to Moscow. The War Cabinet meeting on November

27 discussed the directives he was to be guided by in negotiations with the Soviet Government. Setting out the object of his mission as he saw it, Eden said that it was necessary to remove the Soviet Government's suspicion to the effect that "we should be prepared to make peace with a Germany controlled by the army if they were to overwhelm the party". However, Churchill would not give any promise on that subject. In his statement, the British Premier did not make any secret of the fact that at a certain stage he would, indeed, be prepared to enter into negotiations with representatives of Germany, if Hitler and other leaders of the Nazi party were removed from power.<sup>1</sup>

Soviet Ambassador in London, Ivan Maisky, called on Sir Anthony Eden on December 1 in connection with his forthcoming visit to Moscow. He told him that, in the Soviet Government's opinion, it would be expedient to conclude two treaties during the visit (or one Treaty consisting of two parts). The first one would contain the terms of mutual aid in the war. The second one would refer to the post-war period and concern the post-war peace settlement and the two Powers' policies on Germany. The Soviet Government considered it necessary to take measures to prevent Germany from starting yet another war.

The British War Cabinet meeting on December 4 examined the text of the general Memorandum for Eden drawn up by the Foreign Office. It said it was highly desirable to limit the whole effect of the visit to the publication of an Anglo-Soviet declaration (similar to the Atlantic Charter) which would merely have "certain guiding principles" set out in it. It was found premature, besides, to seek agreement on the post-war territorial settlement.<sup>2</sup> The Memorandum was approved by the War Cabinet without too much discussion.

Once informed of the Memorandum given to Eden, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull instructed the American Ambassador in London, John Winant, to tell the British Foreign Secretary that it would be "unfortunate" if he were to enter into any commitments in Moscow regarding the post-war settlement. Eden promised to take the U.S. Government's opinion into account.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/24.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. 1941*, Vol. 1, p.202-203.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.194-195.



Neither the British, nor the American Governments intended, therefore, to square with the U.S.S.R. any terms of the post-war peace settlement. They thought the Soviet Union would be weakened so much as a result of the war that they would be in a position to resolve most of the world problems at their own discretion and get the Soviet Union to accept the conditions that suited them.

So Eden was going to Moscow as a double-dealer. He was, while talking about an alliance as a "smokescreen", to avoid establishing truly close cooperation with the Soviet Union or assuming any specific Allied commitments.

Eden arrived in Moscow on December 16, 1941, and had his first conversation with Stalin and Molotov later on the same day. The head of the Soviet Government handed the British Foreign Secretary the drafts of the above-mentioned two Treaties. Eden brought along the draft of a joint declaration. Stalin said they should sign a treaty, not a declaration.

The Soviet Head of Government stressed the need to concert the war aims of the U.S.S.R. and Britain which would make the alliance of the two countries closer. If our aims were different, he said, there would be no real alliance. Of the specific problems, the Soviet Government stressed the fundamental importance of having the British Government recognise the Soviet Western frontiers as of June 22, 1941, notably, the incorporation of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia in the U.S.S.R. However, Eden evaded the issue by saying he was not empowered to assume such a commitment.

As far as the Soviet-Polish border was concerned, Stalin pointed out that the general policy of the U.S.S.R. was to stand by the Curzon Line with certain modifications. He expressed the hope that agreement would be reached on that subject but found it possible to leave it an open question for the time being, that is, did not insist on having it settled during Eden's visit.<sup>1</sup>

Stalin spoke up, besides, for the restoration of the independence of Czechoslovakia (within her pre-Munich frontiers), Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece and Austria. He accepted Eden's view that Germany would have to pay reparations but specified that she was to do so by offering her commodities, not money. The British Foreign Secretary said it was

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/24.

necessary for Germany to be brought under military control and also, perhaps, to be dismembered. As early as December 7, Churchill spoke of a possible dismemberment of Germany during his meeting with Maisky in London. The basic task, the British Premier said, was to end the German danger once and for all. What was required for that was Germany's total disarmament, at least, for the lifetime of a whole generation, and division of Germany, with Prussia, above all, separated from the rest of Germany. Referring to the latter issue, Stalin suggested that East Prussia should be turned over to Poland and that the Polish Western border should pass along the Oder.<sup>1</sup>

Yet another issue that was raised during that meeting was that of Turkey. Eden's report to the British War Cabinet said: "Stalin's attitude as regards Turkey had been most reasonable. He had agreed that we should treat Turkey well, and offer her inducements to remain neutral... He had expressed no ambitions with regard to the Straits." To ensure the neutrality of Turkey, the Soviet Head of Government even suggested that Turkey should get back the Dodecanese which had been taken away from her by the Entente Powers after the First World War and turned over to Italy.<sup>2</sup>

Eden, giving no consent to the treaty incorporating a provision about the restoration of the Soviet pre-war frontiers, declared, however, that the British Government did not recognise the existence of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, but reckoned with the Soviet Union's sovereignty over the Baltic country. Eden claimed he would be able to have the matter settled after his return to London. It was decided to continue the negotiations through normal diplomatic channels.

Military issues were also discussed during those conversations. Stalin pointed out that the worst period in Soviet war production was now over. He expected another German offensive in the spring, but if a Second Front were opened, the war might end in 1942. However, the British replied they could not create a Second Front in the near future.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *A History of the Foreign Policy of the U.S.S.R.*, Vol. I, p.443 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/29; *FRUS*, 1942, Vol. 3, p.499.

<sup>3</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p.235.

Eden's visit to Moscow was not particularly productive. But it showed that the British Government also attached considerable importance to an alliance between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain in the war. The conversations in Moscow passed off in a friendly climate. As a result of the visit direct contacts were established between the governments of the two countries. Many issues of interest to both countries were discussed, and agreement in principle was reached with regard to the texts of the Treaties of mutual assistance and cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and Britain in the war and at the time of post-war peace settlement. That is to say that Eden's visit did make a certain contribution towards strengthening Soviet-British war-time cooperation.

#### UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF JANUARY 1, 1942

The very course of events called for greater cooperation between the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the U.S. in the struggle against the common foe, after the U.S. had entered the Second World War. The Soviet Government, on its part, considered it necessary to do everything possible to that end. Following the successful Soviet counter-offensive outside Moscow, London and Washington began to set far more value on the contribution the U.S.S.R. was capable of making towards smashing the aggressors. All the more so since the U.S. and Great Britain were sustaining one major defeat after another in the Far East. There was no real change of principle in their attitude to the U.S.S.R. They still intended to resolve world problems on their own only, without any Soviet participation.

Sir Anthony Eden received no further instructions as he left for Moscow on the very day Japan attacked the U.S. The British Government did not plan to use nor did it use that visit for any actual coordination of the war effort of the two Powers.

London's attitude to cooperation with the U.S. was entirely different. Churchill had decided to go to Washington where an Anglo-American Conference (codenamed Arcadia) was held from December 22, 1941 to January 14, 1942. Yet another fact which attested to Churchill's serious intentions was that he had taken his Chiefs of Staff along. Although it could be seen even from the documents prepared

as background material what importance London attached to the role the Soviet Union was playing in fighting for victory, he meant to concert his military-strategic plans with the U.S. alone.

Thus, the document regarding the prospective Anglo-American strategy, drawn up by the British military authorities on December 16, 1941, pointed to considerable changes in the world situation in the recent period, namely:

"a) The failure of the German army to defeat the Russians. The holding of this front is at once an immense contribution to the process of wearing down the efficiency of the enemy's forces and the lowering of his morale... If the Russian armies can be sustained, the Allies possess for the first time a front on land from which to make a direct assault on the frontiers of Germany at the first sign of enemy disintegration. For these reasons, we regard the continuation of Russian resistance as of primary importance to the Associated Powers in their strategy for the defeat of Germany.

"b) The entry of Japan into the War and the recent losses of capital ships of the Associated Powers has already forced us on to the defensive in the Far East, at any rate temporarily..."<sup>1</sup>

The British military authorities admitted that the Red Army's victories had so far been the only encouraging element. The document also acknowledged the important part the U.S.S.R. could subsequently play in the defeat of the Japanese aggressors:

"With her bombers based within range of Tokyo and her formidable fleet of submarines at Vladivostok, the entry of Russia into the war against Japan would have tremendous consequences. So vital, however, is Russia's role in the West in the defeat of Germany, which is of paramount importance, that we would hesitate to urge Russia into war with Japan if it would vitiate her effort on her European front."

That position of the British military leaders was largely due to the fact that they considered it necessary to conquer Germany first before defeating Japan.

The British military establishment did not intend to make any basic change in the ways and means they used to fight Germany: blockade, bombings and subversive action, with only one point added, namely, giving "support

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office Cab. 99/17.

to the Russians". This implied the shipment of war supplies to the Soviet Union, which amounted, in point of fact, to the old British principle of having the chestnuts pulled out of the fire for them.

The document referred, besides, to "at least a temporary relief" in the Middle East by the rebuff to the German forces "along the whole Russian front, and, particularly, by the Russian success before Rostov".<sup>1</sup>

No offensive operations by British or American forces against Germany were contemplated either for 1942 or even for 1943. The position in London was that for two more years the Soviet Union would still have to fight Germany virtually single-handed.

The United States had but recently found itself in a state of war, and its military institutions had been prepared for an Anglo-American conference less thoroughly than the British. It had already formed a certain judgement on a number of issues. Washington shared the British Government's view that, in spite of the dangerous situation in the Pacific, it was the defeat of Germany, first and foremost, that had to be their basic strategy.<sup>2</sup>

With this aim in view, the American military authorities considered it indispensable to carry through a decisive major offensive "with the main effort in Western Europe". That offensive was to be "made in conjunction with the strongest possible Russian offensive on the Eastern Front".<sup>3</sup>

The American military authorities regarded a possible landing by Western Allies in French North Africa, where there were no German troops at all, not only as subsidiary but as an undesirable diversion from the main objective.<sup>4</sup> However, Roosevelt set great store on the projected landing in French North Africa. It was agreed at the Washington conference that an expeditionary force of about 90,000 United States and 90,000 British troops would be prepared for that operation. The preparations were expected to take about six months.<sup>5</sup> Shortly afterwards, the Chiefs of Staff

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office Cab. 99/17.

<sup>2</sup> M. Matloff and E. M. Snell, *Strategic Planning*, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>4</sup> See: J. R. M. Butler and J. M. A. Gwyer, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. III, Part I, *June 1941-August 1942*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1964, p. 351.

<sup>5</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 99/17, Report on the Washington Conference of January 20, 1942.

of the United States and Britain worked out a concrete plan of the operation.

The conference produced a document which contained the agreed Anglo-American plans for their war strategy. These were based essentially on British proposals.

Taking into account the experience of the First World War, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull had drawn up a proposal to establish a Supreme War Council composed of the Heads or representatives of the Governments of the U.S., the United Kingdom, China and the U.S.S.R. It was to supervise and coordinate the general conduct of the war. The proposal was examined by Roosevelt and Churchill but it did not meet their support.<sup>1</sup> Since they were not going to coordinate their strategic plans and action either with the Soviet Union or with China, the establishment of such a council did not suit their intentions. They decided to set up a bilateral Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee.

So, once the U.S. had entered the war, British and American strategic plans began to be coordinated. Britain, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. had common enemies—Germany and her allies, but because of the position taken up by Britain and the U.S., those two countries turned out to be fighting on their own, as it were, and so was the Soviet Union. Official American historian W. H. McNeill stated that the Washington Conference had set the pattern for Anglo-American military relations—or rather lack of relations—with Russia. “In effect,” he wrote, “*two separate wars were being fought.*”<sup>2</sup>

As to the decision taken at the Conference regarding the need to defeat Germany, first and foremost, it corresponded to the interests of the Soviet Union as well. But the deferment of full-scale action by Britain and the U.S. on the European Continent until 1943 and of the major offensive against Germany even until 1944 drastically reduced the actual value of that decision.

The Anglo-American plans, which boiled down to dragging out the start of military operations directly against Germany for several years and seizing French and Italian colonial possessions in North Africa, i.e., fighting on

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<sup>1</sup> *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Vol. II, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1948, pp.1116, 1121.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. McNeill, *America, Britain & Russia*, p. 118. (Emphasis added.—V. S.).

the African, not the European, Continent, greatly complicated the position of the U.S.S.R. Those plans meant that the brunt of the armed struggle against Germany would be borne almost entirely by the Soviet Union, while the U.S. and Britain intended to sit it out beyond the seas. Both British and American diplomacy willingly lent "moral support" to the U.S.S.R., while withholding from it their purely imperialist plans.

On his way to Washington, Churchill cabled to Stalin to tell him that he would send him "full information" on the British-American negotiations.<sup>1</sup> Yet he did not keep his promise. As will yet be seen, the British and American Governments withheld from the U.S.S.R. the fact of their decision about their strategic plans for the prosecution of the war later on as well.

Roosevelt and Churchill considered it necessary to have a legal formulation of the military-political alliance of all the nations at war with Germany, Italy, Japan and their satellites. Right after the Japanese attack, the U.S. Government began to draft a joint Declaration of all those States. The principle Washington went by was that it was the United States that would have to play the first fiddle in that alliance. In contrast to the First World War, when the U.S. was not one of the main "Allies", that is, one of the Entente Powers, but only an "Associated Power", this time the Government of the United States wanted "to join in a full alliance with the other nations fighting the Axis", as the then Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, wrote in his *Memoirs*. "The Declaration we now prepared," he wrote, "*was in the nature of an alliance*. It embraced the two main points of the usual military alliance; namely, a pledge of full support and coordination in conducting the war against the common enemy, and a pledge not to cease hostilities against the common enemy except by mutual agreement."<sup>2</sup>

Upon Churchill's arrival in Washington, Roosevelt concerted the draft Declaration with him. Then, on December 27, the draft was handed to the Soviet Ambassador in the U.S., Maxim Litvinov, to have it agreed with the Soviet Government. Two days later, he communicated the Soviet Government's consent to sign the Declaration. True, since the

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence ...*, Vol. I, p.37.

<sup>2</sup> *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Vol. II., p.1116. (Emphasis added. — V. S.).

Soviet Union was not in a state of war with Japan, the question was whether the U.S.S.R. would produce a separate Declaration or the text of the joint Declaration would be amended accordingly. It was decided that for the U.S.S.R. to join the common Declaration would be preferable. Accordingly, certain amendments, proposed by the Soviet Government, were introduced in the text.<sup>1</sup>

On Roosevelt's initiative, the original name of the document, the "Declaration by the Associated Powers", was changed to the "United Nations Declaration".

Roosevelt, Churchill, Litvinov and Song Ziwen of China were the first to sign the Declaration in Washington on January 1, 1942. They were followed by representatives of 22 more nations. The introductory part of the Declaration pointed out that "complete victory" over their enemies was essential to defend life, liberty, independence and to preserve human rights and justice. It stressed, likewise, the connection between the Declaration and the Atlantic Charter. The Declaration contained the following major commitments:

"1) Each Government pledges itself to employ its full resources, military or economic, against those members of the Tripartite Pact and its adherents with which such Government is at war.

"2) Each Government pledges itself to cooperate with the Governments signatory hereto, and not to make a separate armistice or peace with the enemies."<sup>2</sup>

The Declaration was open to other nations.

Twenty-six States which signed the Declaration of the United Nations *officially became war allies*. A powerful coalition of States in battle against the bloc of fascist aggressors was created and came to be known as the "United Nations". The Declaration was regarded as of great importance in all the countries which had signed it. The common judgement in most of them was that the forces of the coalition were so much more powerful than the forces of the aggressor bloc that one could be certain of its victory in the war.

The Declaration of the United Nations was also of fundamental importance to the Soviet Union. Whereas before that, the U.S.S.R. had agreements of war-time alliance

<sup>1</sup> *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Vol. II, p. 1122; *FRUS. 1942*, Vol. I, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. 1942*, Vol. 1, pp. 25, 26.



and cooperation only with Britain, Poland and Czechoslovakia, now 25 capitalist States were its allies. It is worth noting in particular that under the Declaration the U.S. became an Ally of both the U.S.S.R. and Britain.

Yet, it was not on paper, but on the battlefronts that the outcome of the war was being decided. The States which had signed the Declaration had undertaken to use all their military and economic resources in the war. That was exactly what the Soviet Union was doing. But one could not say as much about other Parties to the Declaration, as subsequent events showed. It was not at full strength at all that they fought. That applied, first and foremost, to the U.S. and Britain. The negotiations between Roosevelt and Churchill in Washington indicated that they contemplated no major operations for the immediate future.

It is opportune to note, besides, the lack of uniformity in the make-up of the new coalition. Those were States of two opposite social systems—the socialist and the capitalist. The fact that they formed part of one coalition in no way signified the disappearance of class distinctions and contradictions between them. Those contradictions continued to exist. They made themselves felt over and over again. The reactionary quarters of capitalist States persisted in their campaign of slander against the Ally—the U.S.S.R.

The group of capitalist States that formed part of the alliance was not uniform either. That group included, first of all, the U.S. and Britain which were the world's largest imperialist Powers. Their internal regimes differed essentially from those prevalent in Germany and other fascist countries. But their ruling circles, too, had no scruples in launching reprisals, particularly in their overseas possessions, when their positions there were threatened. The coalition comprised other bourgeois-democratic States, as Canada and Australia. But some of its members were States with extremely reactionary regimes. One can mention, for example, the racist regime of South Africa. There were reactionary regimes in certain countries of Latin America which had also put their signature to the Declaration. Many countries, although they had signed the Declaration, did not take any direct part in the hostilities. But the very fact that all those States sided with the anti-Hitler coalition, not the aggressors, was of no mean importance.

## SOVIET-BRITISH TREATY OF ALLIANCE (MAY 26, 1942)

The counter-offensive launched outside Moscow escalated into a general strategic offensive of Soviet forces which went on until April 1942.

The balance on the battlefronts had changed. The Soviet Armed Forces had 4,199,000 men, 27,700 guns and mortars, 1,784 tanks (including 506 heavy and medium tanks) in action as ground forces by January 1. Besides, GHQ had a reserve of 14 divisions and 7 brigades, and more units continued to be formed in hinterland areas.

The ground forces of Nazi Germany and her allies had 3,909,000 men, around 35,000 guns and mortars, and 1,500 tanks on the Soviet-German front. But the German Command did not have much of a reserve force at its disposal on the Soviet-German front. The German troops had been demoralised by their defeat outside Moscow and were ill-prepared for winter fighting.

The enemy forces were pushed back 250 km in the central sector of the Front in the course of the offensive of the Soviet forces from January to April 1942. Soviet troops gained some notable success in other sectors as well. They knocked out 16 enemy divisions and one brigade. On April 20 because of reduced offensive potentialities and the flooded spring roads, the Soviet forces went over to the defensive.

The German ground forces lost a total of over one and a half million killed, wounded, and missing, on the Soviet-German front from June 1941 till late April 1942. The Wehrmacht lost some four thousand tanks and assault guns during the same period.<sup>1</sup>

The successful offensive operations of the Soviet forces in the winter of 1941-1942 were of tremendous importance not only in the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union but in the Second World War as a whole. All freedom-loving nations understood perfectly well that it was on the Soviet-German front that their own destiny was being decided. The British, American and other peoples expressed their ardent sympathies for the heroic struggle of the Soviet Union against Hitler Germany. The British Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Alexander

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 4, pp. 305, 312, 483.

Cadogan spoke of his country's "enthusiastically pro-Russian mood".

The tremendous contribution of the Soviet forces towards the struggle against the common enemy was acknowledged by the Governments of Great Britain, the U.S. and other countries. "Words fail me," Winston Churchill wrote to Stalin on February 11, 1942, "to express the admiration which all of us feel at the continued brilliant successes of your armies against the German invader, but I cannot resist sending you a further word of gratitude and congratulation on all that Russia is doing for the common cause."<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt, in his turn, wrote to the head of the Soviet Government on April 12: "The American people are thrilled by the magnificent fighting of your armed forces."<sup>2</sup>

The admiration for the Soviet people's heroic struggle against the common extremely dangerous enemy resolved itself into a demand of the British and American peoples for more active participation of the armed forces of their countries in the war against Germany and for closer cooperation between Britain, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

One of the questions to be settled was the proposal made by the Soviet Government to Sir Anthony Eden during his visit to Moscow to conclude a Soviet-British Treaty of alliance. The British Government procrastinated, however, in considering the matter.

It was as late as January 28 that Eden submitted a Memorandum on that subject to his Government, favouring the signing of such a treaty. But considering the position of the United States, he wrote, it would be worthwhile turning to Roosevelt once again. Should he decline the Russian proposal as regards her Western frontiers, a compromise arrangement would have to be found while the final settlement would be left for decision at the Peace Conference. Russia would be free to submit her proposals, while "*we should be free to accept or reject them*".<sup>3</sup>

To make clear the proposals repeatedly made by the British Government subsequently to postpone the settlement of a number of issues until the Peace Conference, it would be useful to remember the general sense of such proposals. It was that Britain would no longer be in need of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence ...*, Vol. I, p.39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p.23.

<sup>3</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p.237. (Emphasis added.—V. S.)

U.S.S.R. to overwhelm Germany, and, therefore, it would be in a position *to reject* the Soviet proposals. There was no doubt in London that the majority of the nations attending the Conference would follow the British and U.S. line in deciding these issues.

When Eden's Memorandum came up for discussion at the British War Cabinet meeting on February 6, Lord Beaverbrook declared himself in favour of adopting the proposals of the Soviet Government. "It was worth remembering," he said, "that so far Russia had contributed far more to the war effort than the United States..."<sup>1</sup> Churchill, however, insisted that the matter was subject to agreement with the U.S.

Earlier, however, on February 4, Roosevelt was handed a State Department Memorandum on the subject. That document clearly indicated that, although the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. were allies in the war, the State Department's attitude to the Soviet Union continued to be one of unlimited hostility. The framers of the Memorandum went so far as to claim spuriously, even at a time when the German forces were not far away from Moscow, that Stalin was seeking to make arrangements with Britain "which would make the Soviet Union the dominating power of Eastern Europe if not of the whole continent".<sup>2</sup> Such declarations were no different from the Big Lie of Hitler's Propaganda Minister Goebbels. Having devoted a considerable part of the document to setting out such violently anti-Soviet allegations, the U.S. State Department said it was necessary "to take a firm attitude",<sup>3</sup> that is, refuse to recognise the Soviet frontiers as of June 22, 1941.

While London found it essential to take into account the legitimate interests of the U.S.S.R. as regards the restoration of its pre-war frontiers, the State Department and reactionary governing quarters of the United States held a different view. They did not object to the Soviet Union, in battle against the common enemies, upholding U.S. interests, but had no intention of reckoning with the legitimate interests of the U.S.S.R.

On February 17 and 18, the British Ambassador in Washington, Lord Halifax, handed Roosevelt and Acting Secretary of State Welles the texts of the messages he had re-

<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/29.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. 1942*, Vol. 3, p.507.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.510.

ceived from London, setting out the British Government's position (essentially consistent with the Eden Memorandum). These stressed the point that rejection of the Soviet proposals "may be the end of any prospect of fruitful cooperation with the Soviet Government in our mutual interests." Subsequently, that could also affect the decision of the U.S.S.R. as to whether it was to enter the war against Japan. "There is little doubt that the Soviet Government is suspicious lest our policy of close collaboration with the United States Government will be pursued at the expense of Russian interests and that we aim at Anglo-American peace..."<sup>1</sup>

On March 10, Halifax received further instructions from London for his conversations with Roosevelt in which he was required to be yet more insistent in trying to prove the need to give a positive reply to the Soviet Government. It was pointed out in the telegram to Halifax that the U.S.S.R. wished to be sure that Great Britain and the U.S. went along with its minimum war purposes. Their official position would surely appear to Stalin "so uncollaborative a state of mind as to confirm his suspicion that he can expect no real consideration for Russian interests from ourselves or the United States; that we wish Russia to continue fighting for British and American ends; and that we would not mind seeing Russia and Germany mutually exhaust each other. This ... would make impossible any fruitful collaboration with Russia at this critical juncture. We must face the fact that our present relations with Russia are definitely unsatisfactory and as such constitute a weakness and indeed a danger to our war effort as a whole."<sup>2</sup> The British Ambassador passed the text of the telegram to Welles.

On March 12, 1942, President Roosevelt invited the Soviet Ambassador, Maxim Litvinov, and briefed him on his position. He said that essentially he had no difference of opinion with the Soviet Government over the frontier issue and that he foresaw no problem in the Soviet Union having the frontiers it wanted after the war, though at the moment he found it premature to raise that question.<sup>3</sup> The Soviet Ambassador then asked what would happen if Mr. Roosevelt were not President at the end of the war?<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. 1942*, Vol. 3, pp.514-515.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.532.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 5, p.68 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p.241.

The Soviet Government informed the State Department that it had taken note of Roosevelt's views.<sup>1</sup> On its part, it did not raise the question of Soviet Western frontiers with the United States Government. But the stand taken by U.S. governing quarters on the subject revealed their attitude to the U.S.S.R.

On March 25, the question of concluding a Treaty with the U.S.S.R. was again considered at a British War Cabinet meeting. It was decided to continue negotiations with the Soviet Government "on the basis of their frontier claims". "The fact that we could do relatively little by way of military aid to the Russians," the minutes said, "made the conclusion of a treaty all the more necessary."<sup>2</sup>

Finally, on March 27, Sir Anthony Eden informed the Soviet Ambassador about the British Government's readiness to go ahead with the negotiations and to conclude the Treaties on the lines discussed in Moscow.<sup>3</sup>

When, early in April, the British Government learned about the invitation to Molotov to come to Washington, it decided to invite him to visit London as well.<sup>4</sup>

Molotov arrived in Britain by air on May 20.<sup>5</sup> He was accommodated at Chequers, the Prime Minister's country residence. On the following day, during his meeting with Churchill and Eden in London, Molotov declared that he was authorised to negotiate a Soviet-British Treaty as well as the opening of a Second Front in Europe. He emphasised that the latter issue was of great importance and he proposed to discuss it also with President Roosevelt.

Churchill offered to discuss the draft Treaties first. He began by setting out the existing difficulties, referring to Roosevelt's negative stand. Nevertheless, he said, in order to show that friendship between Great Britain and Russia would continue after the war, the British Government was willing to sign the Treaties that would supply Great Britain's main needs.

In spite of the British Government's decision to accept the Soviet proposals as to the substance of the Treaties,

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. 1942*, Vol. 3, p.536.

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/29.

<sup>3</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p.242.

<sup>4</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/30.

<sup>5</sup> The flight was made right over the front-lines. For security reasons, Molotov travelled under the assumed name of "Mr. Brown".

Churchill started reiterating old reservations, complicating the talks.

Molotov noted that the Soviet Union also had its essential requirements. The Soviet Government considered it necessary to recover the territory seized by the Nazis and could make no concessions in this respect. If it was not possible to reach agreement with the British Government on that basis, the Soviet Government thought it would be better to defer signature altogether for some time.<sup>1</sup>

In the second half of the day, Molotov and Eden discussed the differences that existed. The Soviet representative pointed out that, according to the British draft, Britain actually opposed the U.S.S.R. over the Soviet-Polish frontier. The Soviet Government considered it necessary to recover the 1941 frontiers along the Curzon Line. It would do everything possible to reach agreement with Poland on the subject. During the discussions, Molotov pointed out that East Prussia should be turned over to Poland. But at this moment, he proposed, just as he did during the negotiations in Moscow, leaving the matter in abeyance.<sup>2</sup>

Eden found the proposal about East Prussia to be "very wise". He insisted on special mention in the Treaty of Britain's position with regard to the Soviet-Polish frontier, which brought the talks to a stalemate.

The Foreign Office feared that the British Government's position might give rise to endless conversations as was the case in 1939. Therefore, it prepared a new draft of the Treaty which passed over the issue of the Western frontiers of the U.S.S.R., but contained a new clause—on alliance for a period of twenty years. That new draft was handed to Molotov on May 23.<sup>3</sup>

The British also brought that new draft to the notice of the U.S. Ambassador in London, John Winant who, while conferring with the Soviet People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, spoke in support of the draft.<sup>4</sup>

Since it had become obvious that it was impossible to reach agreement on the basis of the old drafts, Molotov

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<sup>1</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy* Vol. II, pp.249-250; Public Record Office, Cab. 65/26.

<sup>2</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy* Vol. II, pp.250-251.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp.248-249, 251.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.252.

declared on May 25, on instructions from Moscow, that the Soviet Union was willing to sign the Treaty as based on the new draft.

The British Government officially informed Molotov that it recognised Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia to be integral to the U.S.S.R. Their former representatives were removed from the diplomatic list by the Foreign Office.<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet-British Treaty of Alliance in the War Against Hitlerite Germany and Her Associates in Europe and of Collaboration and Mutual Assistance Thereafter was signed on May 26, 1942. The Treaty consisted of two parts. Part I contained a mutual undertaking by the High Contracting Parties to afford one another, in virtue of the alliance established between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain, "military and other assistance and support of all kinds in the war against Germany and all those States which are associated with her in acts of aggression in Europe". The High Contracting Parties undertook not to enter into any negotiations with the Hitlerite Government or any other Government in Germany that does not clearly renounce all aggressive intentions, and not to negotiate or conclude, except by mutual consent, any armistice or peace treaty with Germany or any other State associated with her in acts of aggression in Europe.

Part I of the Treaty was to remain in force "until the reestablishment of peace".<sup>2</sup>

The brief Soviet-British Agreement of July 12, 1941, was replaced by a formal Treaty and had some of its provisions formulated with greater precision. The Treaty now unequivocally stated that an *alliance* had been concluded between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain. Article I of the Treaty referred to "the war against Germany", not just "against Hitlerite Germany", which was a point of no mean importance, considering the aforementioned insidious plans of British reactionaries. Besides, the Treaty was also aimed against Germany's European allies, that is, Italy, Finland, Romania, and Hungary. It was a substantial complement that was to forestall quite a few subsequent misunderstandings in relations between the two countries.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Public Record Office*, Cab. 65/26.

<sup>2</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. 2, pp.663, 664.

<sup>3</sup> In 1943, for example, Britain and the U.S. found themselves obliged to come to terms with the U.S.S.R. over the conclusion of an armistice with Italy.



Part II of the Treaty contained the commitment by the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain to take all measures, after the termination of hostilities, "to render impossible a repetition of aggression and violation of the peace by Germany". In the event of renewed German aggression, the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain undertook to give one another "all the military and other support and assistance". At the same time, the Governments of both countries declared their desire to unite with other nations "for common action to preserve peace and resist aggression in the post-war period". The U.S.S.R. and Great Britain undertook not to conclude any alliance and not to take part in any coalition directed against the other High Contracting Party. Part II of the Treaty was concluded for a period of twenty years to be automatically prolonged if neither Party had renounced the Treaty.<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Government attached essential importance to the Treaty as a factor at work to strengthen relations between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain and to promote their war-time cooperation. Whereas ever since the October Revolution, British imperialism had maintained an extremely hostile attitude to the Soviet State and whereas in the second half of the 1930s it had invariably turned down all of the Soviet Government's proposals for cooperation (including one about alliance) in order to prevent war, it now agreed to an alliance with the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Union now had a legally formalised alliance with another group of imperialist Powers, comprising Britain and the nations cooperating with her. Britain assumed a firm commitment not to conclude a separate peace with Germany, that is, officially relinquished any plans for an imperialist deal with her.

The significance of that Treaty went far beyond the limits of purely Soviet-British relations. Its conclusion meant, at the same time, a further consolidation of the coalition of the United Nations.

One fact that demonstrated the importance which the Soviet Government attached to the Soviet-British Treaty was the extraordinary session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. that had been called to ratify it. Molotov rated the Treaty high in his report to the session on June 18.

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<sup>1</sup> W. P. and Zelda K. Coates, *A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations*, Lawrence & Wishart and the Pilot Press, London, 1945, pp.774-777.

The Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. ratified the Treaty and endorsed Soviet foreign policy as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

The point now was to see how the Soviet-British Treaty would be implemented. To have it carried out in good faith could hasten the end of the war. The Soviet Union was faithfully honouring all its allied commitments and making the greatest possible, in fact the basic contribution towards defeating the common enemy. But one could not say as much about the British Government.

What made that particularly palpable was Britain's stand on the issue of the opening of a Second Front in Europe, that is, on her actual involvement in the hostilities against Germany.

### COMMUNIQUE ON THE SECOND FRONT ISSUE

In the spring of 1942, the Nazis began to concentrate a huge amount of armed strength and military hardware on the Soviet-German front so as to resume offensive operations and deal what they expected would be the decisive, fatal blow at the Soviet Union. Therefore, the Soviet Government was most anxious for Britain and the U.S. to open a Second Front in Western Europe: would the Soviet Union be left exposed once again, just as it had been in 1941, to a strike of virtually the entire war machine of the German Reich, or Britain and the U.S. would, by establishing a Second Front in Europe, also make their contribution towards the struggle against the common enemy. In that case, Germany would have to keep some of her combat-ready forces in Western Europe, and fight a war on two fronts, which would essentially change the balance of forces on the Soviet-German front.

The Soviet Government proceeded from the assumption that Britain, which had been at war with Germany ever since September 1939, but was not involved in major military operations, and the U.S. with its extensive economic resources, were perfectly capable of effectively participating in the joint struggle against the Nazi aggressors as early as 1942. It considered, with good reason, that with the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Britain pooling their efforts, 1942 could have become the crucial year, a turning point in the

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<sup>1</sup> *Izvestia*, June 20, 1942.

Second World War. Conversely, should the Soviet Union have once again been left all alone to confront the aggressor that was mustering the manpower and material resources of almost the whole of capitalist Europe on the Soviet-German front, it would have found itself in an extremely precarious position, with the war dragging on and on and victory farther off.

The ruling circles of Britain and the U.S. did, no doubt, realise the full gravity of the threat hanging over the Soviet Union. They also realised that, with the U.S.S.R. defeated, the chances of their winning the war would have become quite problematic. Nevertheless, they were not in a hurry to open a Second Front in Europe to help crush the common enemy.

That stance of the British and American Governments was under fire all the time from the widest sections of the population of both countries. "Your people and my," Roosevelt wrote to Churchill on April 3, 1942, "demand the establishment of a front to draw off pressure on the Russians, and these peoples are wise enough to see that the Russians are today killing more Germans and destroying more equipment than you and I put together."<sup>1</sup>

Churchill and Roosevelt were lavish in professing their desire to make the greatest possible contribution towards the defeat of Hitler Germany. Those protestations were designed, first and foremost, to mislead and somehow reassure public opinion in their respective countries. They had no intention of heeding it in real earnest.

True, there were some differences between the British and the American strategic plans. The British plans, which the Americans accepted at the Washington Conference in January 1942, provided, as I said, for a landing of British and American forces in French North Africa. But in March 1942, the U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General George Marshall produced his own plan for the prosecution of the war which predicated the military strategy of the U.S. and Britain on a landing of British and American forces in Western Europe. Although Roosevelt was an ardent supporter of the plans for a landing in North Africa, Marshall succeeded in persuading him that that was the right way to defeat Germany as quickly as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> *Roosevelt and Churchill, Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, Ed. by F. L. Loewenheim, H. D. Langley, M. Jones, New York, 1975, p.202.

The strategic plan prepared by Marshall called for an invasion of France by 33 British and American infantry divisions, 14 armoured and motorised divisions and other units in the spring of 1943. At the same time, the plan envisaged the possibility of a limited operation to invade France in September or October 1942, noting that:

"The limited operation would be justified only in case:

"(1) The situation on the Russian front becomes desperate, i.e., the success of German arms becomes so complete as to threaten the imminent collapse of Russian resistance...

"(2) The German situation in Western Europe becomes critically weakened."<sup>1</sup>

Churchill accepted the plan in principle,<sup>2</sup> considering, above all, its major point, that is, the landing in Northern France in 1943. As to the limited operation planned for 1942, the British Chiefs of Staff questioned its practicability.<sup>3</sup>

On April 12, Stalin received a message from Roosevelt who said he wanted him to consider sending Molotov and a General to Washington in the immediate future for an exchange of views. "I have in mind," the U.S. President wrote, "a very important military proposal involving the utilization of our armed forces in a manner to relieve your critical Western Front. This objective carries great weight with me... We want to help you in the destruction of Hitler's armies and materiel more than we are doing now."<sup>4</sup>

That was a message of great promise. Indeed, it promised far more than the U.S. and Britain were actually proposing to do in 1942.

Having arrived in London first, Molotov immediately told Churchill (on May 21, 1942) that the Soviet Government "considers the establishment of a Second Front in the West to be a most urgent issue". Furthermore, he communicated that the initiative belonged to the American Government which had invited him to come to the U.S. to discuss the matter. The People's Commissar expressed the wish to

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<sup>1</sup> J. R. M. Butler, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. III, (Part II), June 1941-August 1942, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1964, p.680.

<sup>2</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, *The Hinge of Fate*, Cassell & Co, Ltd., London, Toronto, Melbourne, Sydney, Wellington, 1951, p.283.

<sup>3</sup> R. Parkinson, *Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat*, pp.392-393.

<sup>4</sup> *Correspondence ...*, Vol. II, p.23.

discuss the issue, before his departure for the U.S., with the British Government.<sup>1</sup>

At a conference attended by Churchill, Attlee, Eden, and British military commanders on May 22, the People's Commissar declared that there was to be fighting of vast magnitude and importance on the Soviet-German front. Therefore, the coming weeks and months "were fraught with serious consequences for the Soviet Union and its Allies". He pointed out that the Soviet Government appreciated the material aid rendered by Great Britain and the United States, but in the prevailing circumstances that was not enough and the establishment of a Second Front was essential. He put it this way: "Could the Allies of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain, above all, draw off at least forty German divisions from the U.S.S.R. in the summer and autumn of 1942 and get them engaged in Western Europe? If that were done, Hitler could have been crushed in 1942, and in any case, this defeat would have been a foregone conclusion as early as that year. Could the Allies do it?"

Replying to the People's Commissar, Churchill confined himself to assuring him that the British Government was studying the matter. At the same time, he sought to prove that the U.S. would not have the requisite armed strength before the end of 1942, and that Britain and the U.S. would not have sufficient landing craft that year. Churchill maintained that the Allies would have a far larger number of ships at their disposal in 1943 and could land on the enemy coast at five or six points, anywhere from Nordkap to Bayonne. Their common plans, he declared, provided for armed forces of the United States and Great Britain up to 1.5 million strong landing on the Continent in 1943.<sup>2</sup>

The London negotiations showed that the British Government did not propose to open a Second Front in Europe in 1942.

Molotov arrived in Washington on May 29, 1942, at the invitation of President Roosevelt. Later in the day, they began to confer about both war-time and post-war cooperation between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Yet another meeting between Molotov and Roosevelt, with nobody else present except Harry Hopkins, took place

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<sup>1</sup> I. N. Zemskov, *Diplomatic History of the Second Front in Europe*, p.70 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.71-72.

in the evening. The President gave a detailed account of his plans for the post-war organisation of the world. He said that the U.S., Britain, Russia and also, possibly, China were "to act as the policemen of the world". All the other nations—Germany, Japan, France, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Scandinavian states, Turkey, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and other countries, were to be disarmed and should not be permitted to have any military forces. The four nations were to maintain sufficient armed forces to impose peace. "If any nation menaced the peace, it could be ... bombed." True, Roosevelt stated that it was not clear as yet whether China could set up a strong central government adequate "to act as a policeman for Japan". Roosevelt opposed the idea of setting up an international organisation comprising a hundred different states. It would, in his opinion, be like the League of Nations and just as "impractical".<sup>1</sup>

Since the expectation in Washington was that three of the said four nations would be left weakened by the war, while the U.S. would be in the prime of its strength, the general idea behind Roosevelt's proposal was that the United States would "police the world". In any case, Washington was not going to reckon with the opinion or sovereign rights of other nations except Britain, the U.S.S.R. and China. Naturally, neither did the American Government contemplate a post-war world with the U.S.S.R. on a truly equal footing with the U.S. But why, then, did Roosevelt say all that, in the first place? Evidently, he decided, by his ostentatiously respectful attitude to the U.S.S.R. in that matter, to give it once more his "moral support". which, in the absence of a Second Front, would stimulate the Soviet Union's war effort nevertheless.

Molotov raised the question of the opening of a Second Front in Western Europe by the United States and Great Britain. Roosevelt said that by the end of 1942 the U.S. would have an army 4 million strong and a Navy of 600,000. But neither the U.S., nor Britain, he maintained, had enough ships to transfer American troops to England and to land them in Europe. All preparations could be completed in 1943 and "the cross-Channel operation could be effectively carried out in 1943". However, the President said, he was trying to convince the American military to "run

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. 1942*, Vol. 3, pp.566-569, 571-574.

the risk and land between 6 and 10 divisions in France" in 1942.

While setting out the Soviet Government's stand on the Second Front, the People's Commissar repeated what he had already said in London: if the Allied Powers, the United States and Great Britain, could draw off at least 40 German divisions, most of which were distinctly second-rate outfits by then, the balance of forces on the Soviet-German front would have drastically changed in favour of the U.S.S.R. As to Roosevelt's remark about a possible landing of between six and ten divisions in Europe in 1942, the People's Commissar found that insufficient.<sup>1</sup>

Although Roosevelt had invited Molotov to come to Washington for negotiations about the establishment of a Second Front, in actual fact, the U.S., just like Britain, was delaying it. Reporting the progress of his negotiations with American officials to Moscow on May 30, the People's Commissar wrote: "Roosevelt and Marshall have declared that they want to create a Second Front but the stumbling-block so far is a shortage of ships to take troops to France. They have told me nothing specific."<sup>2</sup>

Roosevelt made yet another move. While the Soviet request for supplies from July 1942 to June 1943 listed 8 million tonnes of equipment, Roosevelt proposed reducing it to 2 million tonnes, which would, he argued, have made a large number of ships available for the transfer of American troops, tanks and aircraft to England for the cross-Channel operation.<sup>3</sup> But he still would not say whether that operation would then actually take place in 1942.

When the talks were drawing to a close, the People's Commissar said that the Soviet Government had sent him to the U.S. for negotiations on the major issue, that is, the Second Front issue, and asked Roosevelt to specify what he could communicate to Moscow on the subject. The President, summing up his position, replied that the U.S. Government was hoping for the formation of a Second Front in 1942, but that the U.S. Government could not settle the issue alone. There had to be the consent of the British

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<sup>1</sup> I. N. Zemskov, *Diplomatic History of the Second Front in Europe*, pp.75, 77 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Soviet-American Relations... Documents*, Vol. I, pp.178-179, (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> I. N. Zemskov, *Diplomatic History of the Second Front in Europe*, p.81 (in Russian).

who would have to sustain the heaviest casualties in the event of a Second Front being opened. Roosevelt thus limited himself to assurances of goodwill.

A Communique to be published when the Soviet People's Commissar returned to Moscow was agreed upon. It said that Molotov's visit to Washington afforded an opportunity for a friendly exchange of views between him and Roosevelt. "In the course of the conversations, full understanding was reached with regard to the urgent tasks of creating a Second Front in Europe in 1942." The Communique closed by saying that the U.S. President had asked the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. to inform the Soviet Government on his behalf that he felt these conversations "have been most useful in establishing a basis for fruitful and closer relationship between the two governments in the pursuit of the common objectives of the United Nations".<sup>1</sup>

That Communique, underlining as it did the unity of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. in the war against the common enemy, was of certain importance at the time in rallying all the United Nations. As a matter of fact, there was still no such unity of views as was mentioned in the Communique, as could be seen from the course of the talks. What the Communique referred to, for example, was not a U.S. commitment to open a Second Front in Europe in 1942, but only to the "urgent tasks" of opening such a front. Those tasks remained "urgent" until the outcome of the war had been predetermined without any Second Front. Roosevelt did not even conceal from his close associates that the purpose behind his assurances regarding the Second Front was "to reassure the Soviet Government".<sup>2</sup>

That confession revealed Roosevelt's true position in his talks with the Soviet People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. It showed, besides, the unseemly methods and means which Roosevelt had often resorted to. American General Douglas MacArthur, who knew him well, said that Roosevelt was "a man who would never tell the truth when a lie would serve him just as well".<sup>3</sup> That typical feature of the American President was noted by other close associates.]

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<sup>1</sup> *The New York Times*, June 12, 1942.

<sup>2</sup> M. Matloff and E. M. Snell, *Strategic Planning... 1941-1942*, p.293.

<sup>3</sup> William Manchester, *American Caesar*, Dell Publishing Co., New York, 1979, p.273.



But what particular aims did Roosevelt pursue? The aims were purely imperialistic. The President preferred not to speak of them openly. Here is how he instructed his son Elliott shortly before that: "Just figure it's a football game... Say we're the reserves, sitting on the bench. At the moment, the Russians are the first team... We're stated to be ... the climax runner... We'll be fresh... I think our timing will be right ... to carry through the job."<sup>1</sup>

There are quite a few indications that Roosevelt and the U.S. military establishment did not rule out the possibility of Germany managing to inflict a defeat on the Soviet Union in the summer campaign of 1942.<sup>2</sup> But in such a case, a U.S. victory in the war would become impossible. The overwhelming view was, nevertheless, that although the German troops could gain further success and make further headway, they would not overrun the Soviet Union. Therefore, as Hopkins remarked, American generals did not see any dire need for a Second Front.

On his return to London from Washington, Molotov saw Churchill again on June 9. The Soviet People's Commissar briefed him on the conversations he had with Roosevelt, and, referring to the U.S. President's suggestion about a cutback on supplies to the Soviet Union, the People's Commissar said that he had not reacted to it in Washington, but at the present time he could declare that if the British Government considered it possible to organise a Second Front in 1942, the Soviet Government was willing "to reduce somewhat its request for the tonnage of supplies to the U.S.S.R.". Churchill pointed out that preparations were going on to land six divisions in France in the autumn of 1942. But whether it were to be actually attempted or not depended on the situation when the time came. The British and American Governments, he said, were "fully resolved" to invade the Continent in 1943 to the strength of 40 or 50 divisions.<sup>3</sup>

The text of a Soviet-British Communiqué was agreed on the following day. The paragraph referring to the Second

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<sup>1</sup> Elliott Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, With a Foreword by Eleanor Roosevelt, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, New York, 1946, p.54.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1979, pp.346, 351.

<sup>3</sup> *Soviet-British Relations ... Documents*, Vol. I, p.247 (in Russian); Public Record Office, Cab. 65/25.

Front was included in it in the same wording as it was in the Soviet-American Communiqué.

On June 10, the British Premier handed the People's Commissar an aide-memoire setting out the British Government's position on the Second Front. "We are making preparations," it stated, "for a landing on the Continent in August or September 1942... It is impossible to say in advance whether the situation will be such as to make this operation feasible when the time comes. *We can therefore give no promise in the matter.*"<sup>1</sup> As far as the following year was concerned, Churchill made a quite definite promise: "We are concentrating our maximum effort on the organisation and preparation of a large-scale invasion of the Continent of Europe by British and American forces in 1943. We are setting no limit to the scope and objectives of this campaign, which will be carried out in the first instance by over a million men, British and American, with air forces of appropriate strength."<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet-British as well as the Soviet-American Communiqués were published on June 12, 1942.

Although they contained no direct commitments regarding the opening of the Second Front in 1942, they referred to the "urgent tasks of creating a Second Front". The Soviet people, reading those documents, naturally believed that the U.S. and Britain—the two largest imperialist Powers—were in a position to accomplish their urgent tasks. The U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. Admiral William H. Standley cabled to Washington to say that if such a Second Front did not materialise quickly and on a large scale, the Soviet people "will be so deluded in their belief in our sincerity of purpose and will ... that inestimable harm will be done to the cause of the United Nations".<sup>3</sup>

But that applied to the future. In the meantime, the results of the Soviet-British and Soviet-American negotiations had been generally accepted by the peoples of the three nations as a consolidation of the cooperation of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the U.S. in the struggle against the common enemy.

Flags were hoisted on all public and office buildings in

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<sup>1</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, p.305.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 385. Churchill, in his *Memoirs*, quoted a passage from the aide-memoire which referred to 1942 but withheld everything it said about 1943.

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. 1942*, Vol. 3, p.598.

the U.S.S.R. on June 14, 1942. The peoples of the Soviet Union, the United States of America, Great Britain and the Allied nations were observing United Nations Day in token of solidarity in their common struggle against aggression.

There can be no straightforward interpretation of all those facts, however. A demonstration of the unity of the Three Powers in the circumstances was beyond question of essential importance. But their actual effective cooperation in the war against the common enemy would have been by far more important. While the Soviet Union was making the maximum possible contribution to the common cause of the Allies and doing everything possible to win the war, the U.S. and Great Britain could not be said to be doing anything like it. They were not even fighting at half capacity. The U.S. was not involved as yet in the fighting against the land forces of Germany and her European allies.

As to the issue of the Second Front being opened in Europe by the U.S. and Great Britain, the Soviet Government had to proceed from the assumption that for a whole year more, at least, the Soviet Union would still have to bear the brunt of the war against Nazi Germany actually all alone, and that it would have to take upon itself the most serious blow of her war machine in the summer of 1942. It was impossible to plan the action of the Soviet forces for 1942 by counting on Britain and the U.S. fulfilling their Allied duty and making a major contribution to the common cause of fighting against the aggressors.

#### **SOVIET-AMERICAN AGREEMENT OF JUNE 11, 1942**

During the Washington negotiations the U.S. Government handed Molotov a draft agreement on war supplies. Similar accords which have gone down in history as Lend-Lease agreements, had already been concluded by the United States of America with Great Britain (February 23, 1942) and some other countries. In concluding those agreements, the U.S. proceeded from the assumption that they were of benefit to the U.S., first and foremost, since the nations on receipt of American supplies could make a greater contribution towards the common victory, that is, they were fighting for U.S. interests too.

The Soviet-American Lend-Lease pact was signed on June 11, 1942 (when the People's Commissar had already left Washington), by the Soviet Ambassador to the U.S., Maxim Litvinov and U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull. The preamble to the agreement contained references to the Declaration of the United Nations of January 1, 1942. That meant, in point of fact, that the agreement between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. was being concluded as one between two Allied nations, although it did not say so explicitly.

The U.S. undertook to supply the U.S.S.R. "with war articles, war services and war information", while the Soviet Union pledged itself "to contribute to the defense of the United States of America and the strengthening thereof and ... provide such articles, services, facilities or information as it may be in a position to supply".<sup>1</sup>

A similar Agreement was signed also between the U.S.S.R. and Britain in Moscow on June 27, 1942. It provided for military supplies to the Soviet Union from Great Britain on credit. In addition to the earlier credit, the British Government granted a new one, amounting to 25 million pounds, to finance those war deliveries.<sup>2</sup>

The signing of the Soviet-British treaty of alliance in the war against Hitler Germany and her accomplices in Europe and on cooperation and mutual aid after the war and of the Soviet-American agreement on war supplies as well as the Soviet-British agreement concerning the financing of war deliveries was an event of great historic importance. Those accords *rounded off the formation of the Three-Power war coalition.*

Although the cooperation of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Britain in the war had been officially formalised, in actual fact, things were far worse. One of the Allies, the U.S.S.R., continued what was, in point of fact, a single-handed bitter fight against the war machine of imperialist Germany, while the other two Allies, the U.S. and Britain were still holing up.

Former U.S. Ambassador in Moscow Joseph E. Davies, reviewing the situation a year after Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, pointed out that at a time when the full strength of the German forces was concentrated on the

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<sup>1</sup> *The New York Times*, June 12, 1942.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS*, 1942, Vol. 3, p. 711.

German-Russian front, the achievement of the Red Army "looks to the outside world like a military miracle". He stated that the Soviet Union had become an Ally of the United States. Russian resistance "has become a life-and-death matter to all of us". But Germany had assembled in Russia the greatest mechanised army the world had ever seen. If the German offensive of 1942 succeeded, it would certainly mean Axis domination of Europe, Asia and Africa. The U.S. would then have to fight alone against the aggressors with the resources of three continents at their disposal. The government, the people, and the armies of the Soviet Union stood between America and that fate. "True," Davies wrote, "they are also fighting for their own liberties, but it cannot be denied that they are also fighting for the homes and liberties of all free men upon Earth—ourselves not least among them. To the Red Army which stands at the ramparts of our civilization, to the Soviet Government and the Soviet people we owe a measureless debt. The least that a proud and self-respecting American manhood can do is to pay that debt."<sup>1</sup>

The British were even more sensitive to the importance which the Soviet people's heroic resistance had for their own destinies. An official history of the Second World War, published in Great Britain, stated that it was of "enormous military importance to the West" to sustain the Soviet front. It was engaging the bulk of the enemy strength "which might otherwise have been used to overwhelm the British position in the Middle East, move through Spain into Morocco, or renew an attempt at invasion".<sup>2</sup>

However, the United States of America and Great Britain, far from opening a Second Front in Europe, were meeting only some of the commitments they had assumed as to war deliveries to the Soviet Union.

Throughout the winter and the spring, the U.S. and Britain delivered a certain amount of military hardware and other materials. But that was only a fraction of what had been envisaged by the agreements. The U.S., for example, had undertaken to provide the U.S.S.R. from October 1, 1941, to June 30, 1942, with 900 bombers, 900 fighters, 1,125 medium tanks and as many light tanks, 85,000 trucks,

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph E. Davies, *Mission to Moscow*, New York, 1943, pp. 319, 320, 324, 325.

<sup>2</sup> J. R. M. Butler, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. II, Part II, London, 1964, p.583.

etc. In actual fact, however, the Soviet Union received only 267 bombers (29.7 per cent), 278 fighters (30.9 per cent), 363 medium tanks (32.3 per cent), 420 light tanks (37.3 per cent), 16,502 trucks (19 per cent), etc., from the United States during that period.<sup>1</sup>

The new U.S. Ambassador, Admiral William H. Standley, calling on the head of the Soviet Government for the first time on April 23, told him that Roosevelt regretted the delays in the delivery of supplies. In his reminiscences, he admitted that the deliveries were small. Although the British and American governments had discussed suspending deliveries along the Northern route in the summer of 1942, Roosevelt, as usual, was lavish in giving promises. Standley told Stalin that the President had asked him to communicate his assurance of an improvement of the supply situation. At the same time, he asked for more shipments of chrome, manganese, platinum and asbestos from the U.S.S.R. Stalin drew his attention to the fact that some of the war articles coming from the U.S. were unfit for use. He said, for example, that there had been a large consignment of light machine-guns none of which proved to be operational.

A PQ-17 convoy of 34 steamships with war materials on board and 28 British and American warships to escort it was put to sea in June. As the convoy was on its way, the British Admiralty feared it might be attacked by the German battleship *Tirpitz*. Those apprehensions soon turned out to be unjustified but the Admiralty had already ordered the warships to turn back and the steamships with war materials on board to disperse and try and reach Arkhangelsk one by one. The steamships were left defenceless. Twenty-three of them were sunk by German submarines and aircraft. Because of the heedless action of the British Admiralty, 430 tanks, 210 planes, and 3,350 trucks went down together with those steamships. Although the convoy sustained heavy losses through the fault of the British Admiralty, the British Government decided to cancel the dispatch of further convoys.

The Soviet Government considered the British arguments explaining the reasons for the suspension of war deliveries to northern Soviet ports to be inconsistent. It proceed-

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<sup>1</sup> See: *A History of the Foreign Policy of the U.S.S.R.*, Vol. I, p.430 (in Russian).

ed from the assumption that Britain and the U.S. were in a position to carry on the shipments. "Of course, I do not think," Stalin wrote to Churchill, "steady deliveries to northern Soviet ports are possible without risk or loss. But then no major task can be carried out in wartime without risk or loss. You know, of course, that the Soviet Union is suffering far greater losses." The head of the Soviet Government pointed out that he never imagined that the British Government would deny the Soviet Union war supplies precisely at this time, when the Soviet Union was badly in need of them in view of the great tension on the Soviet-German Front.<sup>1</sup>

The suspension of the dispatch of convoys for more than two months (three-quarters of all supplies were to have been shipped by the Northern route) as well as the insignificant capacity of the route through the ports of the Persian Gulf and by the railways of Iran reduced the war supplies to the Soviet Union from the U.S. and Britain to mere trickle by the summer of 1942.

Since the Governments of Britain and the U.S. refused, at the same time, to open a Second Front in Europe, all that seriously impaired the position of the U.S.S.R. in the face of a further full-scale German offensive.

Britain and the U.S. made perfectly clear what kind of Allies they were, how far they could be relied upon, and how much credence might be given to their promises.

The first Supply Protocol expired late in June 1942. It had been only partly fulfilled.

The American and British Governments dragged procrastinated until October 6, 1942, before signing the Supply Protocol for the next year.

#### U.S.S.R. AND THE FREE FRENCH

The Soviet Government was extending and strengthening its links with the London-based National Committee of the Free French under General Charles de Gaulle.

De Gaulle realised that the Soviet Union played and would play the decisive role in fighting against Hitler Germany and, consequently, in creating the conditions for the rebirth of an independent France. Therefore, he was

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p.56.

striving for closer relationship with the U.S.S.R., all the more so since he could have no particular illusions about the attitude of Britain, and, above all, the U.S. to him.

The Soviet Government was prepared to lend the Free French all-round help and assistance in the common struggle against the German aggressors, including that of restoring an independent France. On May 24, 1942, when Molotov was in Britain, he conferred with de Gaulle. The People's Commissar expressed sympathy for the Free French Movement. He declared that the Soviet Government was willing to support that movement and wished to see France "reborn in all her former greatness and splendour". On his part, de Gaulle admitted that the military power and war effort of the U.S.S.R. had produced a tremendous impression on the French people and encouraged them to be more active in fighting the enemy.<sup>1</sup> At de Gaulle's suggestion a communique summing up that conversation was concerted and published.

The Soviet Government went along with de Gaulle in defining the status of the Free French Movement. In mid-June, 1942, de Gaulle handed the Governments of the Three Powers the draft documents defining the status of the Free French and of the French National Committee. Only the Soviet Government accepted the French proposals fully. The British Government proposed essential amendments to the definitions put forward by de Gaulle while the U.S. Government suggested an altogether new version. The amendments boiled down to minimising the role of the Committee under de Gaulle, while Britain and the U.S. retained a free hand in their action to refuse to cooperate with him subsequently and contact any other French authority.

Therefore, the position of the Soviet Government was of great importance to the French National Committee in consolidating its position. The closer relationship between the Soviet Government and the French National Committee also contributed towards rallying the forces of the anti-Hitler coalition.

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet-French Relations ... Documents*, pp.79-81 (in Russian).



## CHURCHILL IN MOSCOW: NO SECOND FRONT IN 1942

The situation on the front once more became extremely precarious by the summer of 1942. The German forces launched a general offensive on June 28. By that time, the enemy had 230 divisions and 16 brigades (a total strength of 5,655,000), over 49,000 guns and mortars, 3,700 tanks and assault guns, and about 3,200 combat aircraft, on the Soviet-German front. The largest forces were deployed in the southern sector of the Soviet-German front. Apart from the German forces, there were 14 Finnish, 13 Romanian, 6 Hungarian, 3 Italian, 2 Slovak, and 1 Spanish divisions on the front since spring. More and more units of Germany's allies, including the Italian 8th Army, were arriving at the Nazi insistence.<sup>1</sup>

In Berlin, it was thought that the forces of the Soviet Union had been substantially undermined, and that the German troops would be in a position to inflict a devastating defeat on it. And yet, in contrast with 1941, the Nazis did not venture into a front-wide offensive, but pressed ahead in the southern sector, trying, in particular, to capture the Donetsk Basin and the Caucasus with its wealth of oil resources.

During the year since the outbreak of the war, the Soviet people accomplished a titanic amount of work in the hardest imaginable conditions to build up the nation's military power. Millions of people as well as a large number of enterprises and a great proportion of industry had been moved deep into the hinterland. There were as many as 1,200 relocated plants and factories in operation already by mid-1942. The munitions industry, once restructured, began to produce much more than it did in the opening stages of the war. It put out upwards of 8,000 combat aircraft, more than 11,000 tanks, over 15,000 guns during the first six months of 1942. Nevertheless, aircraft, tanks, guns and ammunition were still in short supply. One fact to suggest how many of them had to be supplied in the face of the bitter fighting was that over 7,000 combat aircraft had been lost in battle from May to November. The Soviet Army in the field comprised close on 410 divisions by late June. These

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<sup>1</sup> See: *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 5, pp. 121, 145 (in Russian).

had a total of 5,500,000 men, 6,000 tanks, 55,600 guns and mortars and 2,600 aircraft.<sup>1</sup>

Soviet defence capability had been greatly strengthened. But having concentrated 90 divisions in the southern sector of the front, the enemy obtained an edge and launched an offensive. The breach of the strategic front in the South was between 150 and 400 km deep by mid-July.

On July 17, German forces started an offensive on the distant approaches to Stalingrad, but their advance slowed down because of the Soviet Army's staunch resistance. That was how the Great Battle of Stalingrad began. A further stage of that heroic epic set in on September 13 when bitter defensive fighting was going on inside the city itself. The German troops succeeded in breaking through to the Volga. The Soviet forces sustained heavy manpower losses and required a tremendous expenditure of material and technical resources.

Meanwhile, the German forces launched an offensive to capture the Caucasus. With a great superiority of strength and particularly in hardware, the German forces started pressing fast ahead. They reached Ordzhonikidze but they were stopped there by mid-November. The Soviet forces, putting up a heroic resistance, prevented the enemy from breaking through to Baku, Trans-Caucasia and the Black Sea coast. That meant the Nazi plans to march through the Caucasus to the Middle East were frustrated.

The Soviet Union was fighting in incredibly difficult conditions. By the autumn of 1942, the German aggressors had captured an area, which had been inhabited before the war by close on 80,000,000 people or almost 42 per cent of the Soviet population, producing 60 per cent of the national output of steel and claiming 47 per cent of its crop area.

Under those circumstances, the opening of a Second Front in Western Europe by Britain and the U.S. was a point of fundamental importance both for the events on the Soviet-German front and for the entire course of the Second World War. That would make Germany draw off some of her forces from the U.S.S.R.

On June 11, the issue was once again considered at a British War Cabinet meeting but the only decision it passed was that the Second Front should not be opened in 1942.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 5, pp. 36, 48, 143, 318-319 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/30.

Churchill arrived in Washington a week later. He informed Roosevelt of that decision and proposed that the French North-West Africa operation should be studied.<sup>1</sup>

American military authorities believed that a landing in North Africa "will not result in removing one German soldier, tank, or plane from the Russian front". Moreover, General Marshall said that large-scale operations on the Continent would not be possible in 1943 either in the event of some strength being diverted for that action.<sup>2</sup>

In the decision they adopted at Washington, the British and the Americans nominally gave preference to the continued preparations for a large-scale landing in Europe in 1943. At the same time, there was a point stipulating that the opportunities for carrying out a landing operation in North-West Africa had to be carefully studied, and the elaboration of detailed plans for that operation had to be completed as soon as possible.<sup>3</sup> It was that point that constituted the sum and substance of the decision in question.

A further Anglo-American meeting opened in London on July 20. Hopkins and Marshall arrived from Washington to attend it. On the eve of his departure, Roosevelt instructed Hopkins to the effect that if the British did not agree to a landing in France in 1942, if only with a small force, a determination would have to be made as to another specific and definite theatre, North Africa, best of all.<sup>4</sup>

American representatives in London first favoured an invasion of France in 1942, provided that Russia or Germany had their days numbered. But Churchill was dead set against any cross-Channel landing. Under the circumstances, the U.S. President confirmed at a briefing for his envoys at the London conference that he agreed to the North African operation.<sup>5</sup> In that way, he shelved the issue of the opening of a Second Front.

On July 24, the Combined Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. and Britain approved a Memorandum on combat operations in 1942 and 1943. It opened with a statement that there would be no landing of a limited force in France in 1942.

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<sup>1</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, pp.342-343.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare. 1941-1942*, Washington, D. C., 1953, p.242.

<sup>3</sup> J. R. M. Butler, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. III, Part II, pp.627-628.

<sup>4</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p.602.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.685.

It was decided to get down immediately to planning the opening operations in North-West Africa. "It be understood," the Memorandum said, "that a commitment to this operation renders 'round-up' in all probability impracticable of successful execution in 1943."<sup>1</sup>

So the Governments of the U.S. and Britain had unilaterally, without consulting the Soviet Government, renounced the task of opening a Second Front in Europe in 1942, which had been proclaimed in the Soviet-American and Soviet-British Communiques. Moreover, it was a foregone conclusion that the opening of a Second Front would not take place even in 1943, that is, that it was deferred till 1944.

In his message of July 31 to the head of the Soviet Government, Churchill expressed his readiness to arrive in the U.S.S.R. By his visit, he wanted to cushion, to some extent, the blow that Great Britain and the U.S. were striking at the Soviet Union by their refusal to open a Second Front in Europe in 1942. Churchill also sought to find out whether the Red Army could hold out in the face of a fierce German drive to break through across the Caucasus. For if that German attempt had succeeded, he would have had to think of extremely difficult and dangerous defensive fighting in the Middle East, rather than of a landing in North-West Africa.

The head of the Soviet Government immediately sent an official invitation to Winston Churchill. Averell Harriman went to Moscow together with the British Premier on instructions from the U.S. President.

Churchill wrote subsequently that he was flying to Moscow with conflicting feelings: "I pondered on my mission to this sullen, sinister Bolshevik State I had once tried so hard to strangle at its birth."<sup>2</sup>

Churchill and Harriman arrived in Moscow on August 12, 1942. In the evening of the same day, Stalin briefed them on the very involved situation at the front. The enemy was trying, he said, to break through to Baku and to capture Stalingrad. In spite of the Red Army's heroic resistance, the German offensive went on unchecked.

As to the Second Front Churchill maintained that "the British and American Governments did not feel themselves

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<sup>1</sup> "Round-up"—code-name of large-scale cross-Channel invasion.

<sup>2</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, p.428.

able to undertake" an invasion of North France in September 1942. He went on to declare that Britain and the United States were "preparing for a very great operation in 1943". A million American troops, or a force of 27 divisions, were scheduled to reach the British Isles for that purpose. The British were prepared to add 21 divisions.<sup>1</sup>

As one can see from the sources just quoted, that statement of Churchill's had been a deliberate lie because the opening of the Second Front had already been postponed by the British and American Governments from 1943 to 1944.

After hearing Churchill, Stalin asked again whether he had rightly understood that there would be no Second Front in 1942 and that the British Government was refusing even to undertake a cross-Channel operation by 6 to 8 divisions in 1942. The British Premier confirmed that. He maintained that a landing by 6 to 8 divisions would have done more harm than good. The head of the Soviet Government disagreed with Churchill's arguments.<sup>2</sup>

Summing up that part of the conversation, Harriman cabled to Roosevelt: "Stalin took issue at every point with bluntness almost to the point of insult with such remarks as you can't win wars if you aren't willing to take risks and you mustn't be so afraid of the Germans. This phase of the discussions ended by him stating abruptly but with dignity that he could not force action but he did not agree with the arguments."<sup>3</sup>

Churchill then declared that the landing in Europe was not, in his view, the only Second Front. He set out a British and American plan for a landing of 7 American and 5 British divisions in French North Africa (Operation "Torch"), specifying the date, October 30, 1942. After capturing it, he said, they could threaten the belly of Hitler Europe. Churchill drew a picture of a crocodile and explained that the British and the Americans intended "to attack the soft belly of the crocodile". "We could," he said hypocritically again, "make a deadly attack upon Hitler next year."<sup>4</sup>

On the second day of the talks, on August 13, Stalin handed Churchill and Harriman a Memorandum stating that the British Premier considered it impossible to open

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 430.

<sup>2</sup> *Soviet-British Relations... Documents*, Vol. I, p. 269 (in Russian); Public Record Office, FO 800/300/6143.

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. 1942*, Vol. 3, p. 619.

<sup>4</sup> Public Record Office, FO 800/300/6143.

a Second Front in Europe in 1942. That made things harder for the Soviet forces. The Memorandum recorded the conviction that there were the most favourable conditions for a Second Front in Europe in 1942, for nearly all the German forces were tied down on the Soviet-German Front. "It is possible and necessary," the Memorandum said, "to open a second front in Europe in 1942."<sup>1</sup>

Churchill promised to give a written reply to the Memorandum but stated that the decisions, adopted by Britain and the U.S., were final. Harriman subscribed to what the British Prime Minister had said.

Churchill was particularly keen on the Caucasian Front where the German offensive went on. The head of the Soviet Government set out the plans for the defence of the Caucasus and said he was sure that the Soviet forces would hold out.

Stalin raised the issue of supplies. He expressed his gratitude for the supplies received. Yet, at the same time, he pointed out that the supply plans had not been carried out in full with the result that the Soviet Union had received little from the U.S. and Britain. He did not intend to censure them, but found it necessary to state the fact. Promises must be kept to avoid embarrassment, Stalin said.

The head of the Soviet Government emphasised that the U.S.S.R. was losing ten thousand troops on the front-lines every day. Considering that, more sacrifice also had to be made by the other allies. They should not be so afraid of the Germans or overestimate their strength.<sup>2</sup>

Reporting to London about the talks, the British Premier wrote that there had been "a most unpleasant discussion". Stalin said "a great many insulting things, especially about our being too much afraid of fighting the Germans", he said that "we had broken our promise" about a landing in France, that "we had failed in delivering the supplies promised to Russia and only sent remnants after we had taken all we needed for ourselves. Apparently, these complaints were addressed as much to the United States as to ourselves." Churchill said he had strongly objected to all of his contentions, but feared that his visit was a complete failure.<sup>3</sup>

There was a break in the talks. On August 14, Churchill and Harriman handed the Soviet side their aide-mémoires claiming that the British and American Governments had

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I. pp. 60, 61.

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, FO 800/300/6143.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

broken no promise regarding the Second Front in 1942. Churchill referred to the Memorandum of June 10, 1942. He again tried to prove that a landing in French North Africa would be "the best Second Front in 1942, and the only large-scale operation possible". The British memo offered to proclaim that operation, when it began, as the Second Front.<sup>1</sup>

One simple fact showing that offer to be inconsistent, however, was that there was not a single German soldier in all of French North Africa, for, indeed, one could not speak of a front with nobody on it to fight against. The whole of the landing in that area was planned by Britain and the U.S. in such a way as to be carried out without encountering any resistance whatsoever. Naturally, the Soviet Government could not support Churchill's last proposal. It considered it necessary for the Second Front to be opened, in fact, not in word.

Stalin's conversation with Churchill on August 15 was in more measured tones. The British Premier pointed out that the information he had communicated regarding the Second Front was, naturally, very painful for the Russians. That was why he arrived in Moscow himself.

Stalin acknowledged the significance of the meeting itself as well as of the exchange of opinions. He pointed out that there were differences between them, but the personal contacts established meant creating the groundwork for subsequent agreements. The head of the Soviet Government said he took an optimistic view of the situation.

It was found desirable to organise a meeting of the Heads of Government of the U.S.S.R., Britain and the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

In the afternoon, Stalin invited Churchill to dinner. The conversation went on until 3 a.m. The head of the Soviet Government informed him that the U.S.S.R. was now making enough tanks and was no longer in need of having any more supplied to it. But it was still short of trucks. Therefore, it was trucks it would like to receive subsequently instead of tanks. The conferees exchanged views on many other issues as well, including some that had no direct bear-

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, pp. 61, 62; Churchill wanted to pass off that operation for the opening of a Second Front, notably in order to reassure the mass of the British people who were coming out ever more persistently urging for a Second Front.

<sup>2</sup> *Soviet-British Relations... Documents*, p. 279 (in Russian); Public Record Office, FO 800/300/6143.

ing on the prosecution of the war. No controversial issues were raised any more.<sup>1</sup>

Churchill cabled to London to say that his latest conversation with Stalin had given him a very good idea of the position of Russia which looked most encouraging. Stalin spoke with great confidence of being able to hold out until the winter. Goodwill prevailed during the conversation. "I feel that I have established a personal relationship which will be helpful." Assessing of the results of the visit, the British Premier wrote: "On the whole I am definitely encouraged by my visit to Moscow. I am sure that the disappointing news I brought could not have been imported except by me personally without leading to really serious drifting apart. It was my duty to go. Now they know the worst, and having made their protest are entirely friendly, this in spite of the fact that this is their most anxious and agonising time."<sup>2</sup>

Considering the refusal by Britain and the U.S. to open a Second Front in 1942 and the suspension of the sending of convoys, the talks in Moscow were extremely strenuous. But the very fact that a British Premier, and none other than Churchill had come to Moscow for the first time indicated that the British Empire was vitally interested in war-time cooperation with the U.S.S.R.<sup>3</sup> The Soviet Union, on its part, was indeed showing serious interest in closer interaction with Britain and the U.S. Harriman wrote, after the visit was over, that Stalin had shown that he was "anxious to continue the collaboration, not only in the war but after the war as well".<sup>4</sup>

Reporting to a War Cabinet meeting upon his return to London about the results of the visit, Churchill said that "there was no doubt at all of the Russian determination to

<sup>1</sup> I. N. Zemskov, *Diplomatic History of the Second Front in Europe*, p. 130 (in Russian); Public Record Office, FO 800/300/6143.

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, FO 800/300/6143. While informing Roosevelt about his talks in Moscow, the British Premier wrote that his communication about the postponement of the opening of a Second Front had caused grievous disappointment, but that the Russians, nevertheless, "have swallowed this bitter pill". (*Roosevelt and Churchill, Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, p. 240.)

<sup>3</sup> Churchill said at the War Cabinet meeting on September 21: "The total defeat of Russia or the reduction of that country to a minor military factor would let the whole mass of the German Armies loose upon us." (Public Record Office, Cab. 65/31.)

<sup>4</sup> W. A. Harriman and E. Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941-1946*, New York, 1976, p. 162.



continue fighting. Although they had pressed us strongly to start a second front in Europe this year, they had not 'cried misery'"<sup>1</sup>. Churchill pointed out that Stalin had revealed to him his solid reasons for his confidence, including his plan for "a counter-offensive on a great scale" but asked him to keep this specially secret.<sup>2</sup>

Harriman, back in Washington, informed Roosevelt: "There is no question there will be a Russian front. The question is how effective it will be, and the whole course of the war depends on that."<sup>3</sup>

In the summer and autumn of 1942, when the Soviet forces were still fighting a heroic battle virtually single-handed against Nazi Germany, large sections of the population of Britain and the U.S. were more and more vocal in speaking out for a Second Front to be opened in Europe as soon as possible. The Governments of those countries continued to ignore them, yet such feeling could not but worry them, nevertheless.

The press of the two countries was likewise full of demands for the opening of a Second Front and for greater involvement of the U.S. and Britain in the war with a view to bringing it to an end as soon as possible. Quite naturally, reports about those demands were reprinted by Soviet newspapers. London did not like that, however. Late in September 1942, the British Ambassador in Moscow, Archibald Clark Kerr, complained to Molotov about Soviet press comments concerning the Second Front. The Ambassador was told that the Soviet press limited itself to some reprints from American and British newspapers and that Soviet newspapers and readers liked what was being written in Britain and in the U.S. in favour of the Second Front. The Ambassador, nevertheless, insisted that there should be no articles on the subject so that people could forget for a while about the Second Front.

But while the British Government found it possible to forget about the Second Front, the Soviet people remembered all the time, at the height of the German offensive at Stalingrad and in the Caucasus, that their British and American Allies were still on the side-lines.

The Soviet Government's position regarding the Second

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/31.

<sup>2</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, p. 445.

<sup>3</sup> W. A. Harriman and E. Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941-1946*, p. 169.

Front was set out with perfect clarity by Stalin in his interview for the Associated Press correspondent, Henry Cassidi, on October 3, 1942:

*"1. What place does the possibility of a Second Front occupy in the Soviet evaluation of the current situation?"*

*"Answer: A very important—it is possible to say—a primary place.*

*"2. To what extent is Allied aid to the Soviet Union proving effective and what could be done to amplify and improve this aid?"*

*"Answer: In comparison with the assistance which the Soviet Union, drawing off the main German forces, is rendering to its allies, the assistance from the Allies to the Soviet Union is of little effect. To expand and improve this assistance only one thing is required: complete and timely fulfilment by the Allies of their obligations."*<sup>1</sup>

Speaking on November 6, 1942, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the October Revolution, Stalin reverted to the issue of a Second Front in Europe. He emphasised that the absence of a Second Front had been the main reason behind the Germans' tactical gains on the Soviet-German front in the outgoing year because it had enabled the Germans to muster all their reserves, throw them into action on the Eastern front and create a great advantage of forces in the South-Western direction. Should a Second Front exist, he pointed out, the position of the German forces on the Soviet Front would have been deplorable. "That means that the German Army would be facing disaster as early as this summer. But this did not happen because the Germans had been saved by the absence of a Second Front in Europe."<sup>2</sup>

### UNFAIR PLAY OVER SUPPLIES

What made things still worse was that the U.S. and Britain failed to meet their commitments regarding war supplies to the Soviet Union. After a long break in the summer of 1942, only in September did one more convoy arrive in Arkhangelsk. But because of the preparations for a landing in French North Africa, the U.S. and Britain again

<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 1, p. 60 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65-67 (in Russian).

began to consider suspending the dispatch of convoys. As early as August 30, Roosevelt brought the matter up in his message to Churchill.<sup>1</sup>

Roosevelt played no less unfair a game than did Churchill as to what was to be withheld from the Soviet Government and for how long, when American and British imperialists performed yet another disloyal act in respect of the U.S.S.R., and how that was to be covered up with a lot of lip-service to goodwill so as to mislead the Soviet Government. They agreed, for example, to conceal from the Soviet Government the fact that the Second Front would not be opened even in 1943 because of the projected landing of British and American troops in French North Africa. That was a premeditated gross deception of the Soviet Government by Churchill and Roosevelt.

Roosevelt's position (conduct to be exact) in keeping the Soviet Union in the dark about the suspension of convoys was even worse than Churchill's. In a cable of September 27, and in another one of October 5 to the British Premier, the U.S. President insisted that there should be no prior notification about that.<sup>2</sup> He wanted the Soviet Government to face the fact. And that at a time when the Soviet military authorities, in planning the prosecution of the war in the extremely hard conditions of the autumn of 1942, certainly took into account the deliveries promised by the Governments of the U.S. and Britain. For it was in those days, more exactly on October 6, that the Second Supply Protocol was signed. Indeed, Moscow could not proceed from the assumption that Roosevelt, the President of an Allied nation, would, while signing the Supply Protocol, be ordering the convoys with supplies to be held up, and, more than that, would be trying to conceal that from the Soviet Government!

Nor could the Soviet Union be pleased with the quality of the war articles supplied. During a meeting in Moscow with the U.S. Republican Party leader, Wendell Willkie, on September 23, 1942, Stalin pointed out that the British and U.S. Governments supplied the U.S.S.R. with planes which were inferior to the German planes. The U.S. was supplying P-40's instead of Aircobras, while the British supplied Hurricanes instead of Spitfires. He said that the

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<sup>1</sup> *Roosevelt and Churchill, Their Secret Wartime Correspondence* p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, pp. 514, 516,

U.S. and Britain had planes which were equal to, or even better than the German planes, and it was not clear why some of those planes could not be supplied to the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, 150 Aircobras which had been received by the Soviet Union in the U.S. were intercepted on arrival by sea in Britain in September and diverted somewhere else. Naturally, the Soviet Government could not but express its displeasure over such inadmissible acts. On September 20, Stalin cabled to the Soviet Ambassador in London: "I consider the British behaviour over the question of Aircobras to be supreme impudence... The British must not think that we shall tolerate the wrong the British rulers have been doing us more than once." He described the action of the British authorities as "piracy".<sup>2</sup>

In his recollections, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. Standley stated that with Lend-Lease delivery decreasing "to a trickle", the Russians, quite naturally, "were unhappy and became suspicious".<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, Churchill and Roosevelt set about making yet another big fraud in an attempt to mitigate somehow the reaction to their refusal to send the promised convoys, and that when a polar night had set in which made the danger of their being attacked by the Germans materially weaker. The British Premier setting out his plan in a message of September 22 to Roosevelt said he wanted to propose opening Anglo-Soviet staff conversations about a joint landing in Northern Norway, but "under all necessary reserves",<sup>4</sup>—as a smokescreen. The essence of those reserves or, to be exact, subterfuges, was that they were to leave the British Government "free to decide when the result of the Joint Staffs study is completed".<sup>5</sup>

Churchill meant to open staff conversations about a landing in Northern Norway only to declare subsequently that the landing was impossible. Roosevelt, on his part, offered to "make a firm commitment" to the Soviet Government to

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS, 1942*, Vol. 3, p. 643.

<sup>2</sup> *Anglo-Soviet Relations ... Documents*, Vol. I, p. 286 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> W. H. Standley and A. A. Ageton, *Admiral Ambassador to Russia*, pp. 246-247, 287. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>4</sup> *Roosevelt and Churchill. Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, p. 255.

<sup>5</sup> *Public Record Office*. Vol. 4. Prem. 3/470. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

send a British and American Air Force to the Caucasus,<sup>1</sup> but only after the battle with the German and Italian troops in Egypt, of which there was no end in sight as yet, was over.

On October 9, Churchill sent a message to Stalin, squared with Roosevelt, which had their insidious plans at its root. To demonstrate the unanimity of opinion and the concord of action of the U.S. and Britain, Roosevelt also sent a message to the Soviet Government on the same subject at the same time.

How did the Soviet Government react to those utterly false messages? The reaction must have been that which they deserved. The brevity of Stalin's reply to the British Premier's message spoke for itself: "Your message of October 9 received. Thank you."<sup>2</sup> Roosevelt's cable was left unanswered.

Some other documents revealing Churchill's true stand with regard to the Soviet Union in what were extremely trying times for it in the autumn of 1942 have since come to light. Having received the proposals of the Foreign Office regarding the role of the four Powers—Britain, the U.S., the U.S.S.R. and China—in world affairs in the post-war period, Churchill wrote on October 21: "It sounds very simple to pick out these four Big Powers. We cannot however tell what sort of a Russia and what kind of Russian demands we shall have to face... My thoughts rest primarily in Europe—the revival of the glory of Europe, the parent continent of the modern nations and of civilisation. It would be a measureless disaster if Russian barbarism overlaid the culture and independence of the ancient States of Europe."<sup>3</sup>

These lines show the depth of class hatred that Churchill and the British ruling class as a whole had for the Soviet Ally.

Although the Soviet Government could not know every thing that Churchill thought and wrote, it was well aware of his reactionary, imperialist plans, full of class-inspired hostility towards the U.S.S.R.

On October 19, Stalin sent this message to the Soviet Ambassador in London: "All of us here in Moscow have the impression that Churchill wants the U.S.S.R. defeated

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<sup>1</sup> *Roosevelt and Churchill. Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, p. 504.

so as to come to terms with Germany afterwards ... at our country's expense. But for this supposition, one would find it difficult to explain Churchill's handling of the issue of the Second Front in Europe and of arms supplies to the U.S.S.R. which have been shrinking in spite of growing production in Britain, of the question of Hess whom Churchill appears to be keeping in reserve and, finally, of the promise of systematic bombing of Berlin by the British in September, which Churchill has given in Moscow but has not kept in the least, although he could certainly have kept it."<sup>1</sup>

Replying to this message, on October 22, the Soviet Ambassador in London wrote to Moscow to say that the British military conception implied that "it is, principally, the U.S.S.R. that must crush Germany on land, while Britain would merely render her assistance in that struggle". The U.S.S.R. was to have reached the finishing line worn out and weakened, while Britain, having preserved her strength, would play a decisive role at the Peace Conference. The Soviet Ambassador expressed his doubts that "a truly effective Second Front will be established even in the spring of 1943".<sup>2</sup>

Britain and the U.S. fell far short of their targets in fulfilling the commitments they had given to the Soviet Union. Their action showed that their alliance with the U.S.S.R. was a marriage of convenience.

Cooperation with the U.S. and Britain was a matter of fundamental importance to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government kept that in view all the time. And that was quite natural. For until quite recently the Soviet Union had good reason to expect to face the prospect of a war against the entire camp of imperialism. The Soviet people knew what consequences the break-up of the Three-Power Alliance would have had. Germany's efforts to bring it about called it to mind all the time. Therefore, the Soviet Union was doing all it could not only to preserve but to strengthen the coalition of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Britain in the war against the common foes.

The Soviet Government's position was set out in Stalin's speech of November 6, 1942, marking the 25th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. It had a special

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<sup>1</sup> *Anglo-Soviet Relations... Documents*, Vol. I, p. 294 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 6, p. 397 (in Russian).

section: the war-time Alliance of the U.S.S.R., Britain and the U.S. It could now be considered unquestionable, Stalin said, that there had been a fundamental polarisation of forces in the course of the war, with an Italo-German camp and an Anglo-Soviet-American coalition now established. The moral and political reserves of this coalition in Europe—in fact, not only in Europe—were growing day by day. If you considered the correlation of forces between the two coalitions from the standpoint of human and material resources, you could not but come to the conclusion that the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition had an indisputable advantage.

Some said that the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition would surely win out, Stalin went on, if it did not have one ingrained defect capable of weakening and eroding it. This defect was, allegedly, that the coalition consisted of heterogeneous elements having dissimilar ideology and this circumstance would prevent them from organising joint action against the common enemy. "I think this is a wrong contention. It would be ridiculous to deny the difference in ideology and the type of society between the States forming the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition. But does that circumstance rule out the possibility and the expediency of joint action by the members of this coalition against the common enemy threatening to enslave them? Of course, not. Moreover, the impending threat makes it imperative for the members of the coalition to undertake joint action..."

Stalin recalled the facts of the conclusion of the Three-Power agreements of war-time Alliance and cooperation. These facts, he said, showed that the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the U.S. had drawn closer together and formed one combat alliance. "There can be only one conclusion: the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition has every chance of winning out ... and it will, no doubt, win out."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Union made the utmost contribution towards trouncing the Nazi German aspirants to world domination. However, Britain and the U.S. continued to evade full-scale involvement in the hostilities against Germany. Although they had enough strength and resources, they had decided not to open a Second Front in Europe in 1942 and 1943. The American and British Governments suspended war

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union ... Documents*, Vol. 1, pp. 67-70 (in Russian).

supplies to the Soviet Union by the Northern route at what was the hardest time for the Soviet Union, at the height of the Nazi offensive on the Soviet-German front in the summer and autumn of 1942.

While leaving the brunt of the war against Germany to be borne by the Soviet Union, Britain and the U.S. were busy carrying out their imperialist plans. London's prime concern was to save the British Empire, Washington's to take advantage of the weakening of other nations in the war to strengthen the international positions of U.S. imperialism.

The Soviet Union's self-sacrificing struggle, virtually single-handed, against Hitler Germany, which had thrown the biggest-ever war machine into action against it, earned it universal acknowledgement. It won the U.S.S.R. the warm sympathies of the peoples of all the nations engaged in fighting the aggressors.



## Chapter III

# SOVIET DIPLOMACY AT THE TURNING POINT OF THE WAR

## THE TIDE TURNS

Fundamental changes occurred in the Great Patriotic War at the close of 1942.

In hard-fought defensive engagements at Stalingrad and in other sectors of the Front in the summer and autumn of 1942, the Soviet armies wore out the enemy, bled him white, and reduced his attacking potential. In the meantime, Soviet armed strength continued to be built up.

The Soviet economy had successfully stood the test of a single-handed confrontation with the war production of Nazi Germany which had the industries of many other countries of Europe working for her as well. During the latter half of 1942, Soviet plants and factories turned out more military hardware than Germany did throughout the whole of that year.<sup>1</sup> In 1942, the U.S.S.R. produced 21,700 combat aircraft, 24,400 tanks and self-propelled guns, 127,100 guns of various other types and 230,000 mortars. Germany produced 11,600 combat aircraft during that year, 6,200 tanks and assault guns, 40,500 guns of other types, and 9,800 mortars. The balance of forces on the Soviet-German Front in November 1942 was already in favour of the U.S.S.R.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet-German Front still remained the major battlefield of the Second World War. It was the one where its outcome was being decided. Of all the losses sustained by the armed forces of Germany in the second half of 1942, 96 per cent were suffered on the Eastern front.

The Soviet people had created objective conditions for reversing the course of the war. But the position of the Soviet Union remained precarious. The enemy had captured a vast portion of U.S.S.R. territory. He was still within 150-

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 5, pp. 48, 92 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, pp. 168, 200.

200 km of Moscow and was blockading Leningrad. Enemy forces had broken through to the Volga and to the foothills of the Main Caucasian Range. Never had so many enemy troops been on the Soviet-German front as by November 1942—266 divisions all in all. Of these, 193 divisions were German, 18 Finnish, 26 Romanian, 11 Italian, 14 Hungarian, two Slovak, and one Spanish.<sup>1</sup>

The historic Soviet counter-offensive at Stalingrad began on November 19, 1942. Four days later, the Soviet forces, having breached the frontline and advanced far beyond, closed the ring round a large group over 300,000 strong. From January 31 to February 2, the remnants of that group, with General Field Marshal Paulus in command surrendered. Two German armies (the 6th and 4th Panzer armies), two Romanian armies (the 3rd and 4th) and one Italian army had been smashed up in the counter-offensive.

Late in November, the Soviet forces launched an offensive on the Caucasian Front. The enemy forces, fearful of being cut off, began to retreat. The German plans for the capture of the Caucasus and a breakthrough to the Middle East fell through. The Soviet forces made notable headway on other sectors of the front as well.

Over 100 enemy divisions, that is about 40 per cent of all the forces in action against the U.S.S.R., had been put to rout during the fighting on the Soviet-German front from November 1942 to late March 1943. That was a major contribution towards bringing about a basic turn in the war.

The significance of the events on the Soviet-German front is particularly palpable, if compared with the scale of the action that Britain and the U.S. were conducting against German and Italian forces, although late in 1942, they, too, grew somewhat more active.

On October 23, the forces of the British Empire launched an offensive in Egypt. All they had to confront, however, were 8 Italian and 4 German divisions, and even those were undermanned (their total strength came up to about 80,000 men and officers). The British forces drove the enemy out of Egypt, Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and, in early February, entered the territory of Tunisia from the East where their offensive was stopped.

On November 8, 1942, American and British forces began a landing in French North Africa. There were neither Ger-

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 4, pp. 14, 19 (in Russian).

mans nor any Italians there. The resistance of the French forces under the Vichy Government was negligible. Some 1,083 British and American troops were killed during the six-day landing. Allied forces advanced eastwards, without any fighting, across Morocco and Algeria. They were stopped by German and Italian forces in Western Tunisia in the second half of November 1942, and undertook no further offensive action right up to mid-March 1943.

Although the Western Allies of the U.S.S.R. had large forces at their disposal, their involvement in the struggle against the land forces of Germany and her allies was of the least possible dimension. Furthermore, because of the landing in North Africa, the British and the American Air Force considerably reduced the extent of their bombings of the territory of Germany. Moreover the U.S. and Britain did not live up to their commitments regarding supplies to the Soviet Union by the Northern Sea Route. What was most important, however, was that they suspended preparations for a landing in Northern France for quite a long time.

Western historians have done a lot to play down the importance of the Battle of Stalingrad. Yet they cannot obscure the truth. For example, the publishers of a collection of documents *Roosevelt and Churchill. Their Secret Wartime Correspondence* write that "Stalingrad has rightly been described as one of the great turning points of the war", as "the disastrous German defeat". At the same time, they point out "the relatively small size of the Allied campaign in North Africa".<sup>1</sup> W.H. McNeill wrote in his book *America, Britain & Russia* that the Red Army had dealt the Wehrmacht a blow from which it could never recover. After Stalingrad, victory looked certain and "it would be a Russian victory, for the contributions of the Western Allies to Russia's success were not very obvious".<sup>2</sup>

Any attempts at playing down the significance of the Battle of Stalingrad are futile. Its scale, the intensity of the fighting, the military and political consequences were so great that it has gone down in history as the major turning point of the war.

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<sup>1</sup> *Roosevelt and Churchill. Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, pp. 269, 271.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. McNeill, *America, Britain & Russia*, p. 219.

## THE INTERNATIONAL POSITION OF THE U.S.S.R. AFTER THE BATTLE OF STALINGRAD

The crushing defeat of the German forces by the Soviet Army at Stalingrad changed things radically. Although more major battles were still to be fought out, the defeat of Nazi Germany and her allies in the war was a foregone conclusion.

The great victory of the heroic Soviet troops in the Battle of Stalingrad and other offensive operations in the winter of 1942/43 raised the Soviet Union's international prestige to an all-time high level. It brought out the full reality of the role which the Soviet Union was playing in routing the fascist aggressors. The international position of the U.S.S.R. had essentially improved.

Governments, statesmen and public figures were sending messages of congratulation to Moscow. U.S. President Roosevelt wrote that the brilliant victory of the Soviet armies at Stalingrad would remain one of the proudest chapters in the war against Nazism.<sup>1</sup>

Yet another indicative document was a message from King George VI of Great Britain in which he said that he had ordered a Sword of Honour to be made to be presented to the City of Stalingrad. I hope, he wrote, that this sword "might be a token of the admiration not only of the British peoples but of the whole civilised world".<sup>2</sup>

Newspapers of many of the United Nations published exultant appraisals of the greatest victory over the Nazi aggressors. It was suggested that the disaster at Stalingrad presaged the inevitable fall of the Reich.

The 25th anniversary of the Soviet Army was widely marked in many countries. Following a special decision by the British Government,<sup>3</sup> Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Anthony Eden spoke at a special meeting in the Albert Hall, London's biggest concert hall, on February 21, 1943. He emphasised that never in all its long history, had the German Army sustained such an unmitigated disaster as the Red Army had inflicted upon it in the Battle of Stalingrad. It showed that German troops could be defeated.<sup>4</sup>

One idea that began to be expressed more and more often

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. II, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, February 22, 1943, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/33.

<sup>4</sup> *The Times*, February 22, 1943, p. 2.

in the U.S., Britain and other countries forming part of the United Nations was that the Soviet Union should henceforward be reckoned with as one of the world's most powerful and influential nations. Analysing the views of Roosevelt and Hopkins, American historian Robert E. Sherwood wrote that, following the sweeping victory at Stalingrad, they had to recognise Russia as a great world Power.

There was a rising trend in many countries to strengthen relations with the U.S.S.R. for it was becoming obvious that the resolution of all major international problems, including the post-war problems, would be impossible without the participation of the Soviet Union. A number of nations which had no diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. before, now sought to establish them.

The British Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, who was in London at the time, was instructed on February 4 to try, on his return to Moscow, to open a general discussion about the post-war settlement so as to "remove Russian suspicions".<sup>1</sup> True, the British Government itself was only beginning to work out its position with regard to these issues. Clark Kerr received no specific directives and so, as a matter of fact, had to do some talking rather than negotiating. But the very existence of such instructions is indicative.

The victory in the Battle of Stalingrad inspired the peoples of all the Nazi-occupied countries of Europe to further extend and intensify the national liberation struggle. There was more reason for the captive nations to hope for their liberation now, and that hope redoubled their strength and made them certain that the sacrifices they had been making were not in vain, but would bring the hour of victory nearer. The fact that the Soviet Union was the only nation capable of halting the aggressors and the only one that was making the decisive contribution towards defeating them was conducive to strengthening the positions of the Communists in the struggle against the invaders. Having started as a struggle for national liberation, it was turning more and more, under Communist leadership, into a struggle for social emancipation.

The Soviet Government made every effort to hasten the end of the war and V-Day not only by military but by

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<sup>1</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, pp. 250-251.

diplomatic means as well. It was pressing for the coalition of the U.S.S.R., Britain and the U.S., and of all the United Nations, to be strengthened and for them to build up their thrust at the common foe. The Soviet Government attached the greatest importance, in that context, to the opening of a Second Front in Europe by Britain and the U.S., which could well hasten the defeat of Nazi Germany. To delay the opening of a Second Front meant dragging out the war and mounting the toll of casualties and suffering.

At the same time, the Soviet Government sought better understanding and closer cooperation between the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Britain on many other issues as well. It proceeded from the conviction that the cooperation established between the Three Powers in the war against the common foe could and must be maintained in resolving the various problems of the post-war peace settlement and that it could and must continue in the post-war period too.

Quite a few politicians of the Allied nations realised that the only right conclusion to be drawn from the rapidly rising international influence of the U.S.S.R. due to its victories over the principal aggressor—Nazi Germany, was that it was necessary to look for and discover the ways to mutual understanding with the Soviet Union. One of them was the closest assistant of the U.S. President, Harry Hopkins, whose views were reflected in a note prepared, under his instructions, by General J. Burns. He summed them up as follows: "We not only need Russia as a powerful fighting ally in order to defeat Germany but eventually we will also need her in a similar role to defeat Japan." He pointed out that without the U.S.S.R., the United States of America might fail to win the war. As to the post-war period, the note stated: "If the Allies are victorious, Russia will be one of the three most powerful countries in the world." Considering all that, the note said, there was every reason to seek cooperation with her both in the war and after it was over.<sup>1</sup>

The content of that note reflected Roosevelt's views as well. But there is one essential point. Washington presumed that the United States would have the first fiddle to play in that Big Three.

Roosevelt's general commitment to cooperation with the U.S.S.R. both in the war and in the post-war period contributed towards strengthening the anti-Hitler coalition.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 641-642.

However, when it came to the actual handling of any particular problem, the position taken up by the United States was by no means conducive to such cooperation. That was best seen from the U.S. Government's treatment of the Second Front issue.

Some statesmen in Britain also proceeded from her interest in the closest possible cooperation with the Soviet Union. Lord Beaverbrook was one of them, as I stated earlier on. On February 10, 1943, he wrote: "It is my conviction that in a firm alliance, carried through without any reservations, with Russia, lies the best and possibly only hope of a stable peace after a complete victory."<sup>1</sup>

But it was Churchill, who called the tune in the British Government and he held quite different views. Because of their unrestrained hatred for the Socialist country, he as well as the overwhelming majority of the ruling establishment of the British Empire looked upon the U.S.S.R. as no more than an imposed, makeshift Ally. The Soviet successes were beginning to generate rather ambivalent emotions in those quarters. Soviet Ambassador to Britain, Ivan Maisky, put down in his diary on February 5, 1943:

"What is Britain's reaction to our victories? It is impossible to give a brief answer to this question, for Britain's reaction to the Red Army's successes is involved and contradictory.

"The first thing that strikes one whenever you p use to think of it, is the general surprise at the strength of the U.S.S.R. and the power of the Red Army. Nobody expected we would be able to preserve so much of our fighting capacity after the ordeals of last summer...

"The second feeling evoked by the events in the U.S.S.R. is that of tremendous admiration for the Soviet people and for the Red Army... Yet that feeling is not so general as that of amazement. It is the masses that have an unlimited and unqualified feeling of admiration. The U.S.S.R.'s prestige has risen incredibly over the past three months....

"The reaction of the British ruling classes to our military successes is even more involved. On the one hand, they are pleased: it is very good that the Russians are beating the Germans so hard. It will make things easier for us. We will have fewer casualties and less destruction. And we will once more achieve our everlasting ambition of having

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<sup>1</sup> A.J.P. Taylor, *Beaverbrook*, p. 542.

somebody else do our fighting for us. But, on the other hand, the ruling classes ... are uneasy: won't that make the Bolsheviks too strong?... And the more success the Soviet arms gain, the greater is the disquiet of the ruling elite."<sup>1</sup>

Churchill, realising though he did that the Soviet Union was playing the decisive part in the defeat of Hitler Germany (and, there by, in saving Britain), nevertheless remained the greatest hater of the Socialist country out of class considerations. As it became increasingly obvious towards the end of 1942 that Germany would never overrun the Soviet Union and so could no longer threaten Britain, he began to change his political line. The leader of the British Conservatives started to think of choosing the right moment to stop considering Germany his "enemy No. 1" and to ponder again, first and foremost, of his struggle against the Soviet Union. Churchill thus reflected the common principle of all British imperialism.

Reactionary elements in the U.S. were holding similar views. Vice-President Henry Wallace, in his diary in December 1942, described the State Department as a "bastion of standpat conservatism and anti-Soviet sentiment".<sup>2</sup> U.S. historian Mark A. Stoler, who made a thorough study of the matter, pointed out that many in the governing quarters of the U.S. and also of Britain had a "fear of Russian success", a fear of increased influence of the U.S.S.R. in Europe following the defeat of Germany.<sup>3</sup>

Possible consequences also worried the U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., Standley. "The Soviet Union," he wrote in the spring of 1943, "now enjoys an unprecedented popularity in Britain and the U.S. and I have little doubt also in the countries of devastated Europe. This admiration has been well earned by the heroic resistance of the Soviet people and the Red Army and this in turn will be associated in the minds of many people with the Soviet system."<sup>4</sup>

Quite a few British and American reactionary elements were in particular harbouring plans for concluding a sepa-

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<sup>1</sup> Ivan Maisky, *A Soviet Diplomat's Reminiscences, 1925-1945*, Moscow, 1971, p. 668 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> J. Samuel Walker, *Henry A. Wallace and American Foreign Policy*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, London, England, 1976, p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> Mark A. Stoler, *The Politics of the Second Front*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, London, England, 1977, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> FRUS. 1943, Vol. 3, p. 535.



rate peace with Germany on an anti-Soviet basis. They were interested in having Hitler off the stage as soon as possible in the hope to see Germany ruled by an establishment with which they could strike an imperialist deal.

After the German defeat at Stalingrad some of the Nazi top leadership also began to exhibit the intention to establish unofficial secret contacts with representatives of Britain and the U.S. They hoped to drive a wedge between the members of the anti-Hitler coalition and in that way keep the Third Reich from collapsing. At the same time, they were sounding the conditions for a separate peace between Germany, on the one hand, and Britain and the U.S., on the other.

Enough evidence has come to light about the contacts between the main representative of the U.S. secret services in Europe, Allen Dulles, who had "direct assignments and powers from the White House" and Hitler's agent Prince M. Hohenlohe in Switzerland. During their conversation in mid-February 1943, Dulles declared that he "agreed more or less to a Europe organised politically and industrially on the basis of large territories, and considered that a federal Greater Germany (similar to the United States), with an associated Danube Confederation, would be the best guarantee of order and progress in Central and Eastern Europe". He said that he "does not reject National-Socialism in its basic ideas and deeds", so much as Prussian militarism. Of the Soviet Union, Dulles spoke with scant sympathy, emphasising that he felt it necessary to support the formation of a cordon sanitaire against Bolshevism through the eastward enlargement of Poland (that is, at the expense of Soviet lands) and comprising Rumania and Hungary.

Dulles set out a programme for concluding a separate peace in the West, whereupon Germany, together with Poland and the Danube Federation, could have become an anti-Soviet outpost of the imperialist camp.

Contacts between British ruling quarters and the Nazis regarding a separate peace had been established, notably, through Franco, the Spanish fascist chief. He said in a conversation with the British Ambassador to Spain, Samuel Hoare, a Munichite, in January 1943: "I consider it Britain's fatal mistake to be still supporting Soviet Russia... The only right thing would be for Britain to work for a compromise peace with Germany in good time." Hoare replied that those comments were "most interesting", and

suggested that "conversations should be continued".<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain had information that "there are some high-ranking officials in Britain, even a Cabinet member, advocating the idea of peaceful mediation and a general European front against Bolshevism".<sup>2</sup>

The secret negotiations the British and Americans conducted with the Nazis regarding the conclusion of a separate peace were a blatant violation of their Allied commitments to the U.S.S.R. and of their Allied duty.

It was not, however, the above-mentioned cunning plans and designs of the reactionary quarters of those two Powers that determined the general course of events in relations between the U.S.S.R. and Britain and the U.S. at the time. The Soviet Union, Britain and the United States of America were at war with their common, and still very strong and dangerous enemies. They were most interested in cooperation for the sake of winning the war. That common task took precedence over everything else. Nor could the rising sympathy of the mass of the people in the U.S. and Britain for the Soviet people and admiration for their titanic struggle against the German forces fail to influence the policies of their respective Governments.

The devastating defeat in the Battle of Stalingrad shook the entire aggressor fascist bloc in Europe to its foundations. Germany went into mourning for three days. The internal situation in Italy, Romania and Hungary also worsened because of the smash-up of large contingents of Italian, Romanian and Hungarian troops, apart from German, at Stalingrad. The fascist bloc showed signs of an impending crisis.

#### CHURCHILL'S ANTI-SOVIET COLLUSION WITH THE TURKS

The defeat of the German forces at Stalingrad and in the North Caucasus had a certain impact on the position of Turkey. As early as August 1942, Turkish leaders had declared that Turkey was "supremely interested in the destruction of the Russian colossus" and "in the fullest possible defeat of

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany*, Third Issue, *German Policy in Spain (1939-1943)*, Moscow, 1946, pp. 151-152 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

Bolshevik Russia".<sup>1</sup> The Turkish rulers waited for the Soviet Union to collapse so as to get some of its lands. Turkey had 25 divisions on the Soviet-Turkish border in the autumn of 1942. In spite of the defeat of the German forces at Stalingrad and in the Caucasus, the Turkish leaders still nurtured the hope that the U.S.S.R. would not hold out. In mid-March, 1943, the Assistant Chief of the Turkish General Staff declared in a conversation with the Bulgarian envoy to Turkey, Kirov, that "Ankara earnestly desires a German victory in the East and that Turkey would restrain from any action that would weaken the German effort in smashing Bolshevism".<sup>2</sup>

But while when the German forces were on the offensive there was serious reason to fear that Turkey might (just as in the First World War) turn out to be a direct Ally of German imperialism in the aggression against the U.S.S.R., by the end of 1942 that danger had diminished.

Churchill was now planning to use the anti-Soviet sentiment of the ruling establishment of Turkey. In the event of a further German retreat he wanted to prompt Turkey to move her forces into Bulgaria and Romania so as to bar the way to the Soviet Army.

On January 30 and 31, 1943, Churchill was in Turkey. He met President Ismet İnönü, Prime Minister Şükrü Saracoğlu, and Minister of Foreign Affairs N. Menemencioğlu at Adana, near the border between Turkey and Syria. As soon as the meeting was over, the British Premier communicated to the head of the Soviet Government that in the course of his negotiations with the Turks he had expressed the hope that they would in due course, "by a strained interpretation of neutrality", allow their airfields to be used for refuelling for British and American bombing attacks on the Romanian Ploesti oil wells.<sup>3</sup>

That message was, however, just another case of Churchill's deception of the Soviet Ally. The records of the Adana conversations revealed that the subject at issue was entirely different. Churchill declared that Germany might

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany*, Second Issue, *German Policy in Turkey (1941-1943)*, pp. 58, 92, 98 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Records of Diplomatic History*, Microfilm File, Kirov's Letter of March 23, 1943, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 90.

collapse or some change might take place there. In such an event "there might be anarchy in the Balkans" (i.e. a revolution). Turkey must be strong and "ready to throw in her weight when that moment arrives".

Further on, Churchill said that Russia "would ultimately be very powerful" and, he claimed, might be even imperialistic. In connection with that provocative anti-Soviet statement, Menemencioğlu asked what line the British Government would take if the Turkish liaison with Great Britain "was affected by any Soviet action". Churchill pointed out that in the event of a conflict with Russia, "*Britain would create the maximum possible combination against Russia*".

Setting out the position of Turkey, İnönü declared that she would remain neutral for the time being but "there was always the possibility of Turkish intervention, for example, in the case of anarchy in the Balkans".<sup>1</sup>

That was the major item under discussion at the Anglo-Turkish Conference at Adana. It had essentially sprung from Churchill's ambition to induce Turkey to move Turkish troops into the Balkan countries, in the event of German forces retreating from there, with the object of suppressing the revolution and preventing Soviet troops entering those countries. The Turkish ruling quarters expressed their agreement in principle. Furthermore, the negotiators did not rule out the possibility of a conflict breaking out between the Soviet forces thrashing the enemy and the Turkish units invading the Balkan countries. The British Premier assured the Turkish leaders that in such an event, Turkey would get all possible aid for action against the U.S.S.R. Churchill promised to increase military supplies to Turkey.

True, the British Premier also made a few impartial statements about the U.S.S.R. He said, for example, that he was "very grateful for what Russia had done" in the course of the war. He emphasised Russia's benevolent attitude to Turkey as well as her desire for cooperation with Britain and the U.S. The British Premier mentioned the Anglo-Soviet Treaty concluded for twenty years and expressed the conviction that the Russians would keep their engagements. "*Hitherto they have never broken an engagement,*" he said.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 66/34, *Records of the Conversations at Adana on 30th and 31st January, 1943.* (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

Inönü assured his negotiating partners that "everything that had been said in the present discussion with regard to the Soviets would be buried in silence and never mentioned outside this conference room".<sup>1</sup>

The conferees did have something to bury in silence. While in earlier days, the ruling quarters of Turkey had collaborated with Germany against the U.S.S.R., now their growing cooperation with Britain and the U.S. had once more turned out to be directed against the Soviet Union.

In the Adana talks, Churchill blatantly violated his Allied commitments to the U.S.S.R. Unlike the Soviet Union, which was faithfully honouring the agreements it had concluded, he had already begun to set up an alliance against it.

Nor did the Adana negotiators succeed in keeping their conversations secret. As can be seen from German and Bulgarian public records, the Governments of those countries had been thoroughly informed about their content, and moreover, not only about what had been said at official sessions and written into the records just quoted, but also about what had been said in Churchill's private discussions with İnönü.

The Bulgarian envoy in Ankara, Kirov, communicated to his Government that, according to the information he had from Turkish sources, the object of Churchill's arrival "was to enlist the cooperation of Turkey for the period, which would set in at the end of the war and after it so as to safeguard the Balkans from anarchy" and "Bolshevik infection". One subject negotiated was the formation of 50 divisions by Turkey with assistance from Britain and the U.S., of which 30 divisions were to be designed for action against the Bolsheviks in the Balkans.<sup>2</sup>

The German Government received similar information about the Adana meeting. Furthermore, as it found out, it had been decided that, when Turkey entered the war, she "would permit the British Navy to pass through the Straits into the Black Sea. British forces would then land on Romanian and Bulgarian shores to forestall the Soviets".<sup>3</sup> The Nazis had found out from intercepted and deciphered British

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> *Records of Diplomatic History*, Microfilm File, Kirov's Letter of March 16, 1943, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Records of Diplomatic History*, Report of February 26, 1943 (in Russian).

and Turkish diplomatic messages that Churchill had told the Turks that Britain had no intention of destroying the German Reich.

Naturally, the Soviet Government knew nothing about that when Stalin replied on February 6 to Churchill's communication about his conversations in Adana. He wrote, in particular, that if the Turks wanted closer and more friendly relations with the U.S.S.R., "let them say so. In that case the Soviet Union will meet them half-way".<sup>1</sup>

The Turkish Government showed no intention of improving relations with the U.S.S.R. which had been impaired by Turkey's cooperation with Hitlerite Germany. It made no proposals to that effect. The German Consul-General in Istanbul reported to Berlin that it was "not in the interests of Turkey at all to see Germany defeated" by the Soviet-Anglo-American coalition.<sup>2</sup> So said the Turkish President as well. İnönü even asked Churchill whether he wished to discuss with the German Ambassador to Turkey von Papen the possibility of Britain and Germany making a peace.<sup>3</sup>

The Turkish ruling elements kept entertaining an affection for Nazi Germany even after the Battle of Stalingrad, and remained hostile towards the Soviet Union. True, they had to drop their plans for grabbing Soviet lands but began to prepare for an invasion of the Balkans so as to move in once the German invaders were out.

#### **BRITAIN AND THE U.S. REFUSE TO OPEN A SECOND FRONT IN 1943**

Britain and the United States had, beyond question, prepared themselves well enough for effective involvement in the hostilities by the end of 1942, that is, more than three years after the U.K. had entered the Second World War, and a year after the U.S. had done so. Nevertheless, London and Washington kept scuttling away from full-scale hostilities against Germany.

As they drew up their plans for 1943, the Governments of Britain and the U.S. once again contemplated action only by

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence ...*, Vol. I, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> *Documents of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs*, Second Issue, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> Franz von Papen, *Memoirs*, London, 1952, pp. 494-495.

Soviet troops against Germany's major land forces. That meant that London and Washington still intended to have the Soviet Union bear the brunt of the war. "It is beyond doubt," the Soviet Ambassador to the U.S., Maxim Litvinov, wrote, "that the idea behind the military calculations of those two States is for the forces of the Soviet Union to be exhausted and worn out to the utmost so as to reduce its role in resolving the post-war problems."<sup>1</sup>

Britain and the U.S., undesirous and even shy of coming to grips with the German forces, picked the weaker opponent at the time whom they hoped to overpower without particular difficulty. At first, that was the forces of the France of Vichy in her North African colonies. In 1943, Britain and the U.S. proposed to occupy the whole of North Africa and then launch an offensive against Italy.

Churchill, naturally, realised what reaction the violation by Britain and the U.S. of their commitment to open a Second Front in Europe in 1943 would produce in Moscow. In a note to the Chiefs of Staff, he pointed out that it could hardly "be supposed that the Russians will be content with our lying down like this during the whole 1943, while Hitler has a third crack at them".<sup>2</sup> In another document, the British Premier admitted that the Anglo-American plans for 1943 "are on altogether too small a scale compared with the resources and power of Britain and the United States."<sup>3</sup> But Churchill had no scruples about confronting the Soviet Union by the prospect of no Second Front in 1943 either.

In the latter half of November 1942 the Second Front in Northern France was projected for as late as 1944 in the correspondence between Churchill and Roosevelt.

Yet another Conference of Roosevelt and Churchill to concert British and American plans for the prosecution of the war took place in Casablanca on January 14 to 23, 1943. At the end of that Conference, they approved a report drawn up by the Combined Chiefs of Staff which had the capture of Sicily in July planned as the object of major operations.<sup>4</sup>

Decisions of principle on the opening of the Second Front

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<sup>1</sup> I. N. Zemskov, *Diplomatic History of the Second Front in Europe*, p. 148 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, p. 582.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 588.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Howard, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. IV, *August 1942-September 1943*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1972, p. 625.

in Europe were set out in another document of the Conference, approved by the Combined Chiefs of Staff on January 22, 1943. Paragraph 1 of that document said that the U.S. and Britain were unable to stage a large-scale invasion of the Continent during 1943. The landing was envisaged only for 1944.<sup>1</sup>

Both the tone and decisions of the Conference in respect of the Soviet Union had changed essentially. Earlier on, there were two versions of plans for action under consideration, one to be used in the event of the U.S.S.R. collapsing, and the other in case that did not happen. This time the possibility of the U.S.S.R. being defeated was no longer considered.

Instead, the discussions revolved over and over again around the issue of supplies for the Soviet Union. It was stated that the dispatch of convoys by the Northern route would again have to be discontinued in view of the landing operations in Sicily. At the same time, war supplies to the Soviet Union were considered desirable and a paying investment "*in order to get the best value out of Russia*".<sup>2</sup>

Those pronouncements are indicative in view of the fact that a good deal had been written in the West about something like philanthropic "aid" to the Soviet Union from the U.S. and Britain. In actual fact, however, the U.S. and U.K. Governments, as I noted, had quite an axe to grind as they gave it.

Their spokesmen at the Conference acknowledged the part that the Soviet forces played in the war against Germany, and made it clear that they wanted them to bear the brunt of the war further on.<sup>3</sup>

At a press conference summing up the meeting, Roosevelt declared that he found it necessary to press for "the unconditional surrender" by Germany and Japan.<sup>4</sup>

Roosevelt's and Churchill's joint message to the head of the Soviet Government opened, as before, with a hypocritical statement that the operations they were planning, together with a powerful offensive by the Soviet forces, "may well bring Germany to her knees in 1943. Every effort must be made to accomplish this purpose". "Our main desire has

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 99/24.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Washington, 1941-1942, and Casablanca, 1943*, Washington, 1968. (Emphasis added.— V. S.)

<sup>3</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 99/24.

<sup>4</sup> M. Howard, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. IV, p. 282.



been," they wrote, "to divert strong German land and air forces from the Russian front and to send Russia the maximum flow of supplies." As to the specific plans of the U.S. and Britain, they communicated that their intention was "to clear the Axis out of North Africa" and "launch large-scale amphibious operations in the Mediterranean". On the question of a Second Front, the message said that the U.S. and Britain intended to concentrate a strong American land and air force within the United Kingdom, which, combined with the British forces, "will prepare themselves to re-enter the continent of Europe as soon as practicable."<sup>1</sup>

The message Roosevelt and Churchill sent to the Soviet Government about their meeting was not information, but misinformation. In actual fact, not a word was spoken at the Conference about how to defeat Germany in 1943. The authors of the message concealed their decision not to open a Second Front in 1943, but to operate in the Mediterranean only, and confine even those operations to a landing in Sicily.

Of course, the authors of the message realised that it would not satisfy the Soviet Government. Nevertheless, they decided in advance to act exclusively in accordance with their own imperialistic interests, having no regard for their Allied obligations to the U.S.S.R. to defeat Germany as soon as possible, and ignored its inevitable protests. On January 26, Churchill cabled to the War Cabinet: "Nothing in the world will be accepted by Stalin as an alternative to our placing 50 or 60 divisions in France by the spring of this year. I think he will be disappointed and furious with the joint message... After all, our backs are broad."<sup>2</sup>

Even before the Conference ended, Eden talked it over with Maisky. It was clear from his comments that the opening of a Second Front in Europe might be postponed. In that connection, the Soviet Ambassador emphasised that "should the Soviet Union's hopes for the establishment of an effective Second Front be disappointed once again, the consequences of such a fact would be very serious for Anglo-Soviet relations".<sup>3</sup>

The head of the Soviet Government replied in a most po-

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence ...*, Vol. I, pp. 86, 87.

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, Prem., 3/420/3, June, 29, 1943.

<sup>3</sup> I. N. Zemskov, *Diplomatic History of the Second Front in Europe*, p. 137 (in Russian).

lite way to the above-quoted message but put the straightforward question to him: "Assuming that your decisions on Germany are designed to defeat her by opening a Second Front in Europe in 1943, I should be grateful if you would inform me of the concrete operations planned and of their timing."<sup>1</sup>

On February 9, Churchill sent a message to Stalin,<sup>2</sup> but pointed out that he had been authorised to give a common reply.<sup>3</sup> He wrote that American and British forces were to expel the Germans and Italians out of Eastern Tunisia during April, if not earlier. The U.S. and Britain intended to seize Sicily in July or earlier. Further on, the message said: "We are also pushing preparations to the limit of our resources for a cross-Channel operation in August, in which British and United States units would participate... If the operation is delayed by the weather or other reasons, *it will be prepared with stronger forces for September.*"<sup>4</sup>

The message was a promise by the Governments of Britain and the U.S., in fact, their commitment to carry out a landing in Northern France, i.e. to open a Second Front in September 1943, at the latest.

The records of the Casablanca Conference have now been published in the U.S., and British and American war-time public records have been declassified. All of these indicate that nothing was done to prepare the operation Churchill told the Soviet Government about. The decisions taken provided for something entirely different, as I stated earlier on. Churchill and Roosevelt again gave such promises to the head of the Soviet Government in their message which they had no intention of keeping.

It could be seen from Maisky's message of February 13 that Churchill's and Roosevelt's statements were, indeed, called in question, rather than taken at face value. The Soviet Ambassador wrote that the British Government, on the one hand, would like to "put off the establishment of a Second Front until a later date to wait for the Red Army to have done most of the job and to have broken the backbone of the German war machine", after which all that the British

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence ...*, Vol. I, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> This message was received by the Soviet Government on February 12.

<sup>3</sup> Roosevelt had made some corrections in the message drafted by Churchill.

<sup>4</sup> *Correspondence ...*, Vol. I, pp. 93, 94. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

Army (together with the U.S. Army) would have to do was to land "comfortably" in France and advance all the way to Berlin without heavy losses. On the other hand, the British Government feared that if it delayed the opening of a Second Front in the West for too long, it could well miss the right moment and allow the Red Army to reach Berlin before the Allies did so. For that reason, the timing of the Second Front was a major issue for the British Government, and it was not so much military, as political considerations that prompted its decision. From the British Government's point of view, the Second Front was to be established neither too soon nor too late but "in the nick of time". To judge by the decisions taken in Casablanca, Britain and the U.S. seemed to be thinking that they still had enough time before the right moment for action came.

On February 16, Stalin insisted in his messages to Roosevelt and Churchill that the Second Front should be opened either in the spring or early in the summer of that year. He pointed out that the Germans had moved 27 divisions, including 5 armoured divisions, to the Soviet-German Front from France, the Low Countries, and Germany proper since the end of December. "The sooner," he wrote, "we make joint use of the Hitler camp's difficulties at the front, the more grounds we shall have for anticipating early defeat for Hitler... Having gained a respite and rallied their forces, the Germans might recover. It is clear to you and us that such an undesirable miscalculation should not be made."<sup>1</sup>

In his message of March 11, Churchill did not say that Britain and the U.S. would open a Second Front in August or September 1943. True, neither did he admit that they would not open it, but tried to get away with generalities. The essence of his message was this: "By far the larger part of the British Army is in North Africa, in the Middle East and in India and there is no physical possibility of moving it by sea back to the British Isles." There were 38 divisions there, and as few as 19 divisions on the British Isles. In Britain, Churchill wrote, there was now only one American division, and no more were expected for two months at least. At the same time, there was another point of fundamental importance at the very end of the British Premier's message. "In making, for your personal information," he wrote, "this

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence ...*, Vol. I, p. 95.

declaration of our intentions ... I must not be understood to limit our freedom of decision."<sup>1</sup>

The essential point of Churchill's new message was that it was impossible to open a Second Front in 1943 just because there were no forces required for that. Now what he had earlier communicated on his own behalf and on behalf of Roosevelt was not an obligation, it turned out, nor a promise to open a Second Front in August or September 1943, but only information about their intentions which he and Roosevelt, the Governments of Britain and the United States, were free to alter whenever and as much as they liked. That was what the statements of the Soviet Union's war-time Allies were worth.

It was clear from the message, furthermore, that Britain and the U.S. were concentrating their forces not on the British Isles, as they had promised the Soviet Government, but elsewhere.

The British and American Governments appeared to realise perfectly well that the continued inaction of their armed forces at a time when the Soviet Union was engaged in fierce fighting against the bulk of the German troops put them, as Allies, in an extremely awkward position. Churchill admitted in his message to Hopkins that in April, May and June "not a single American or British soldier will be killing a single German or Italian soldier while the Russians are chasing 185 divisions around".<sup>2</sup> Yet Britain considered it premature to intensify her participation in the hostilities.

What adversely affected the relations of Britain and the U.S. with the U.S.S.R., apart from their reluctance to open a Second Front in Western Europe, was the stand they had taken up on the issue of supplies to the Soviet Union by the Northern Sea Route. Several convoys had arrived by that route in the U.S.S.R. in the winter of 1942-1943, which brought over a considerable amount of munitions and other war materials under the Second Supply Protocol. For example, two convoys, comprising 29 ships, were dispatched in December after a long break in the summer and autumn of 1942, and a 14-ship convoy in January 1943. Twenty-two steamers arrived in Soviet Northern ports with the February convoy.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence ...*, Vol. I, pp. 101, 102.

<sup>2</sup> R. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, p. 380.

<sup>3</sup> See: M. Howard, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. IV, pp. 330-331.

In March 1943, the U.S. published some information about Lend-Lease deliveries to other nations during the two years since the appropriate Act was promulgated in the U.S. Only 6 per cent of all American supplies went to the U.S.S.R. during the first year that the Act was in force (68 per cent went to Britain). Throughout the second year, the Soviet Union got 29 per cent of American Lend-Lease supplies.

The convoy scheduled for March was again cancelled by agreement between the British and American Governments. London and Washington understood perfectly well that with no Second Front yet opened, the refusal to send a convoy with supplies to the U.S.S.R. on top of that could not but incur natural indignation in Moscow. But Churchill was prepared for that. "I think we might just as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb,"<sup>1</sup> he wrote.

On March 30, Churchill reported to Moscow about the cancellation of the March convoy and also said that another convoy was to be sent only in September.<sup>2</sup> In actual fact, that promise was not kept either. Stalin sent a terse reply to the British Premier saying: "I regard this unexpected step as a catastrophic cut in the delivery of strategic raw materials and munitions to the Soviet Union..."<sup>3</sup>

So, the Western Allies had once more demonstrated their real attitude to the fulfilment of the obligations they had assumed. The official British history of the Second World War has admitted that the total amount of deliveries sent by the Northern route in 1942-43 was only about a tenth of what was to have been shipped that route, and the total had fallen short of the programme by 34 per cent.<sup>4</sup>

Germany, having carried through an all-out mobilisation of her manpower and material resources, launched full-scale preparations for yet another major offensive on the Soviet-German front. Heavy fighting was in the offing. Therefore, the Soviet Union was still interested in the early opening of a Second Front in Europe by Britain and the U.S., that is, in having them fulfil the commitment they had given to the U.S.S.R.

By mid-May, the Anglo-American forces had finally rounded off their action in North Africa, overrunning the whole of

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<sup>1</sup> M. Howard, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. IV, p. 332.

<sup>2</sup> See: *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>4</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p. 569.

Tunisia. In that campaign, the British and American Allies lost only 10,290 men killed.<sup>1</sup>

Churchill went to Washington again to thrash out further action plans. He conferred with Roosevelt from May 12 to May 25. Although Britain and the U.S. had more than once promised to the Soviet Union to open a Second Front in Europe in 1943, they did not even consider the issue at the time.

At the end of the talks Roosevelt and Churchill approved the Anglo-American military operations projected for 1943 and 1944. To defeat the Axis Powers in Europe, they contemplated, first, a "bomber offensive" from the United Kingdom; second, a "cross-Channel operation", though not in 1943. It was tentatively fixed for May 1, 1944. The landing was to be carried out by 9 divisions to be followed up by 20 more divisions that were to be shipped to the spring-board thus captured; third, after the seizure of Sicily, it was thought necessary to carry out yet another operation to eliminate Italy from the war.<sup>2</sup>

From Washington Churchill proceeded to North Africa to continue the discussion of military-strategic issues with Alan Brooke, George Marshall, Dwight Eisenhower and other British and American military leaders. They talked, in particular, about the role of Soviet and Anglo-American forces in routing Germany. As the records of those negotiations show, the British proceeded from the assumption that "the Russian Army was the only land force that could yield decisive results. Any Anglo-American force that could be put upon the Continent was merely a drop in the bucket". Churchill pointed out that the Russians were keeping 218 German divisions on their front, and even by May 1, 1944, Britain would have as few as 29 divisions available for the landing.<sup>3</sup> As that document indicated, there was a perfect understanding in Britain and the U.S. that the Soviet Union had played and would play the decisive part in defeating Germany. At the same time, it demonstrated the intention to have the U.S.S.R. continue to bear the brunt of the struggle since Britain and the U.S. could have made a far greater contribution towards routing the German forces had they wished to do so.

<sup>1</sup> See: *History of the Second World War*, Vol. VI, p. 225 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> M. Howard, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. IV, pp. 662, 663.

<sup>3</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 90/22, *Record of the Meeting Held on May 29, 1943*.

On June 4, Roosevelt informed the Soviet Government about the decisions taken (the text of his message had been agreed with Churchill). On the Second Front issue, the U.S. President wrote: "Under the present plans there should be a sufficiently large concentration of men and materiel in the British Isles in the spring of 1944 to permit a full-scale invasion of the Continent at that time."<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt concealed the date fixed for the start of the operation—May 1, 1944.

In a message of June 24 to Churchill, Stalin recalled all the assurances of the British Government to the effect that the landing would be carried out in 1943, and with a large force. "There is no need to say," Stalin wrote, "that the Soviet Government cannot become reconciled to this disregard of vital Soviet interests in the war against the common enemy.

"You say that you 'quite understand' my disappointment. I must tell you that the point here is not just the disappointment of the Soviet Government, *but the preservation of its confidence in its Allies, a confidence which is being subjected to severe stress.*"<sup>2</sup>

A copy of that message was sent to Roosevelt as well.

In those circumstances, the Soviet Government found any further correspondence on the Second Front issue pointless. Without doing any good, it could only have impaired what were already seriously complicated relations between the U.S.S.R. and its Western Allies.

Churchill was the most consistent opponent of a Second Front in Northern France. Even Harriman, who was in London in those days, wrote, describing his stand: "The Prime Minister, after all, was an unabashed imperialist who had marked himself as an enemy of the Bolshevik regime by openly advocating Allied intervention to choke the Revolution in 1918."<sup>3</sup>

The recall of the Soviet Ambassadors in London and Washington (Ivan Maisky and Maxim Litvinov) late in June 1943 was a pointer to the serious deterioration of relations between the U.S.S.R., Britain and the U.S. Soviet periodicals began printing articles which analysed Britain's and the United States' policies on the opening of the Second Front in Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. II, pp.68-69.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p.138. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>3</sup> W. A. Harriman and E. Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin*, p.216.

## AFTER THE BATTLE OF KURSK

The major events of the Second World War in 1943 once again occurred on the Soviet-German front. The enemy's main groups had to be smashed up in order to liberate Soviet soil from the German invaders. The first thing to do was to wear out the enemy's strike groups in a defensive engagement, and so create favourable conditions for an offensive.

Since the enemy had been driven out of a number of economically and strategically important areas late in 1942 and early in 1943, the nation's material and technical resources were expanded and consolidated. In 1943, the U.S.S.R. produced 130,300 guns, 24,100 tanks and self-propelled guns, 29,900 combat aircraft. The output of munitions increased considerably. The Soviet Army already had an adequate supply of artillery, tanks, and aircraft.

With a large production potential at their disposal both in Germany proper and in the Nazi-occupied countries,<sup>1</sup> the Germans had, following an all-out mobilisation, also substantially increased war production in 1943 as compared with 1942. They turned out 73,700 guns, 10,700 tanks and assault guns, and 19,300 combat aircraft.<sup>2</sup>

But the figures just quoted show that the Soviet Armed Forces had an appreciable advantage in military hardware, which was, in many aspects of its battlefield performance, superior to the enemy's combat equipment.

And yet! the war machine of Germany and her allies in the aggression remained a tremendous force. In the spring of 1943, Germany had 273 divisions of which 194 were operating on the Soviet-German front. Finnish, Romanian, Hungarian and Italian troops participated in the war against the U.S.S.R together with them. The scale and intensity of the armed struggle were yet to be built up.

On July 5, the German forces launched an offensive in the area of the Kursk Bulge. But they ran into extensive defences that had been set up by superior Soviet forces. A week later, the German armies turned out to be so worn down and bled white as to have their offensive potentialities used up.

On July 12, the Soviet Army launched a counter-offensive north of Kursk. The greatest head-on tank battle of the

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<sup>1</sup> Only in France German war orders were being fulfilled by 14,000 enterprises.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 12, p.200 (in Russian).



Second World War broke out on the southern face of the Kursk Bulge, in the vicinity of Prokhorovka, on the very same day. It involved 1,200 tanks and self-propelled guns on both sides. Soviet armour scored a major victory in that battle. The Germans lost up to 400 tanks. On August 3, the Soviet forces launched an offensive south of Kursk as well.

The Battle of Kursk was one of the greatest World War II operations in terms of scale, intensity, and outcome.

Following the devastating defeat of the German forces in the Battle of Kursk, the relation of power and resources on the Soviet-German front changed radically in favour of the Soviet Army. Soviet forces had captured the strategic initiative which they no longer relinquished.

The Battle of Kursk, just like the Battle of Stalingrad, had far-reaching international repercussions. The Soviet Union's international prestige was higher still. It was obvious that the U.S.S.R. was able to gain the upper hand over Nazi Germany even confronting her alone.

The Battle of Kursk started off the Soviet Army's general strategic offensive. Much of the Ukraine, including Kiev, had been liberated by the end of the year, and German troops on the Central Front were hurled back.

Against the backdrop of that major turning point in the war, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff drew up a document on August 2, 1943, concerning the role of the U.S.S.R. in the war which thoroughly revised earlier assessments.

"In World War II, Russia occupies a dominant position and is the decisive factor looking toward the defeat of the Axis in Europe," the document said. "While in Sicily the forces of Great Britain and the United States are being opposed by 2 German divisions, the Russian front is receiving attention of approximately 200 German divisions. Whenever the Allies open a second front on the Continent, it will be decidedly a *secondary* front to that of Russia: theirs will continue to be the main effort. Without Russia in the war, the Axis cannot be defeated in Europe, and the position of the United Nations becomes precarious." Similarly, the document said, after the war Russia would be the strongest nation in Europe.

The war in the Pacific was yet another extremely important point that the United States had to bear in mind in its relationship with Russia. "With Russia as an ally in the war against Japan, the war can be terminated in less time and

at less expense in life and resources than if the reverse were the case. Should the war in the Pacific have to be carried on with an unfriendly or a negative attitude on the part of Russia, the difficulties will be immeasurably increased and operations might become abortive."

And further on: "The conclusion reached is that Russia is so necessary to victory and peace that we must give her maximum assistance and make every effort to develop and maintain the most friendly relations with her."<sup>1</sup>

That document is of particular importance because the views it contains were shared by Roosevelt. Hopkins also noted the conclusions contained in it.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, the U.S. began to make a more realistic assessment of the potentialities of the Soviet Union and of its role both in the war and in the post-war world, which served to identify the stand that was to be taken up with regard to the U.S.S.R. subsequently.

The document just quoted pointed out that quite a few American representatives working with the Russians did not abide by a policy of promoting confidence and friendship in relations with the U.S.S.R. It suggested replacing them or getting them to change their view. The document offered to recall the U.S. Ambassador in Moscow William Standley,<sup>3</sup> who was advocating a "tough line" on the U.S.S.R.

Shortly afterwards Standley was recalled and Harriman was appointed to replace him as U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. In his reminiscences, Harriman stated that that was the "lowest point" in the history of the Soviet-American war-time Alliance. He believed that relations with the U.S.S.R. could and had to be improved. On July 5, 1943, he wrote to Roosevelt: "As you know, I am a confirmed optimist in our relations with Russia because of my conviction that *Stalin wants, if obtainable, a firm understanding with you and America more than anything else—after the destruction of Hitler.* He sees Russia's reconstruction and security more soundly based on it than on any alternative." Harriman pointed out that he shared Roosevelt's desire for continued cooperation with the U.S.S.R.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Washington and Quebec. 1943*, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1970, pp. 624-625.

<sup>2</sup> W. A. Harriman and E. Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin*, p.224.

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Washington and Quebec. 1943*, p.626.

<sup>4</sup> W. A. Harriman and E. Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin*, pp.213, 218, 219.

But American ruling circles, including Roosevelt, Hopkins, Harriman and others, did not for a moment forget about U.S. imperialist interests whenever they had to consider any issues. Therefore, they had something different on their minds following the turn of the tide achieved by the Soviet Army and the prospect of a further rise of the international prestige and influence of the U.S.S.R. The U.S. attached paramount importance to having American forces occupy as much of Europe as possible by the end of the war. That was one of the reasons why the U.S. considered it possible to be ready to open a Second Front in Europe in the spring of 1944. Moreover, there were plans for an emergency landing in Germany and for the occupation of her main regions in case she had collapsed before that. Roosevelt was extremely anxious to see British and American troops reach Berlin before, or at least at the same time as the Soviet forces did. He said so time and again at U.S. Chiefs of Staff meetings.<sup>1</sup>

George Marshall expressed the hope that in the event of an overwhelming preponderance of Russian forces, the Germans would themselves be likely "to facilitate our entry into the country to repel the Russians".<sup>2</sup>

Churchill's plans were set out in his note to the Chiefs of Staff on July 19, 1943. He questioned the possibility and expediency of an invasion of Northern France as early as the spring of 1944. He still believed that the most useful thing in the interests of British imperialism was for the British and American forces to keep up their operations in the Mediterranean. He was harbouring plans for an invasion of the Balkans so as, on the one hand, to reinforce the British position there, and, on the other, to forestall the entry of Soviet forces.<sup>3</sup>

Even American military quarters have admitted that the extension of operations in the Mediterranean theatre was a strategic course of action that "would cause the U.S.S.R. and Germany to annihilate each other", while the U.S. and Britain would be limiting themselves to small-scale operations and a "*periphery-pecking complex*".<sup>4</sup> Hopkins stated that Churchill had "lengthened the timing of the war" by

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<sup>1</sup> M. Matloff, *Strategic Planning...*, p.226.

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 99/23, August 20, 1943.

<sup>3</sup> M. Howard, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. IV, pp. 564-565.

<sup>4</sup> M. Matloff, *Strategic Planning...*, pp.178, 144. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

his delaying tactics in opening the Second Front, otherwise, the end would already have been in sight.<sup>1</sup>

In July 1943, the British and American military agencies were through with planning the invasion of Northern France which was codenamed Operation Overlord. The key idea behind it was that the U.S.S.R. must still draw off the bulk of Germany's armed forces to make the operation a full success.<sup>2</sup> The British and American military authorities thus again admitted that the Soviet forces were playing the decisive role in defeating Germany.

Vigorous Soviet action did not let the Nazis so much as consider taking any full-strength divisions away from the Eastern front. At the same time, German divisions, regrouped and refitted were rushed from France to the Soviet-German front.

Roosevelt and Churchill met again at Quebec from August 14 to 24 against the backdrop of a mounting powerful offensive of the Soviet Army and the completion by British and American forces of the operation to capture Sicily. It was decided that Overlord would be "the primary United States-British ground and air effort against the Axis of Europe" (barring an "independent and complete Russian victory"). The 1st of May 1944 was reaffirmed as target day. It was believed to be necessary to keep the plans "for an emergency operation to enter the Continent". For the immediate subsequent period, the U.S. and Britain decided to limit themselves to operations in Italy so as to knock her out of the war.<sup>3</sup>

The decisions of the Conference meant that the British and American forces would still be refraining from any more or less serious involvement in hostilities against Germany in the second half of 1943 as well as in the first four months of 1944.

Upon the conclusion of the Quebec meeting, Roosevelt and Churchill sent a joint message to Stalin with brief (and inaccurate) information about the decisions taken. The Soviet Government left the message unanswered.

Ivan Maisky, while in London late in August 1943, told Anthony Eden that two things that stood out in the U.S.S.R. were the general certainty about complete victory over the

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Moran, *Winston Churchill*, p.110.

<sup>2</sup> M. Matloff, *Strategic Planning...*, p.172.

<sup>3</sup> M. Howard, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. IV, pp.682-685.

enemy and general discontent with the Western Allies over the absence of a Second Front.<sup>1</sup>

As the Battle of Kursk, which Germany fought at her full strength, got under way, British and American forces landed in Sicily on July 10. Mussolini turned to Hitler for help but Germany was no longer in a position to respond as promptly as required. By August 18, British and American forces had occupied the whole island.

An internal political crisis was coming to a head in Italy. There was a mounting anti-fascist resistance movement of the working class and mounting pressure for Italy to quit. To maintain the prevailing scheme of things, its ruling establishment sought to get rid of Mussolini. On July 24, the Grand Fascist Council passed a vote of no confidence in Mussolini. On the following day, the King had Mussolini arrested, and called on Marshall Badoglio to form a new government which put out feelers to the British and Americans to find a way to withdraw from the war.

The Governments of Great Britain and the U.S. had worked out in advance "brief" and "exhaustive" terms for the surrender of Italy. That had been done without consulting the Soviet Government. But in the international setting which had changed in the wake of the Battle of Kursk, London and Washington found that total disregard for the Soviet Union in that matter could be damaging to the interests of Britain and the United States. The U.S. Ambassador in London, John Winant, wrote to Washington that when the Russian armies begin to liberate other countries, the British and the Americans "might well want to influence their terms of capitulation". It was, therefore, desirable to consult the Soviet Government about the terms of surrender of Italy.<sup>2</sup>

On August 19, Churchill and Roosevelt informed the Soviet Government about the terms of surrender which they intended to communicate to the Italian Government.<sup>3</sup> Without objecting to those terms, Stalin proposed setting up a military-political commission of representatives of the three countries—the U.S.A., Great Britain and the U.S.S.R.—for consideration of problems related to negotiations with various Governments falling away

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<sup>1</sup> I. N. Zemskov, *A Diplomatic History of the Second Front in Europe*, p.203 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> H. Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, p.167.

<sup>3</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p.145.

from Germany. "To date it has been like this," he wrote, the U.S. and Britain reach agreement between themselves while the U.S.S.R. is informed of the Agreement between the two Powers as a third party looking passively on. I must say that this situation cannot be tolerated any longer."<sup>1</sup>

The "brief terms" of the capitulation of Italy were signed on September 3, 1943, and the full terms, on September 29. One of the major fascist aggressors had surrendered. But that was only the beginning of the end of the fascist bloc.

As to the formation of a military-political commission, the British War Cabinet found it necessary to agree to the Soviet proposal. It proceeded from the assumption that if Britain rejected it, the Soviet Government "would have an excuse to deal independently with Germany and Eastern Europe."<sup>2</sup>

Agreement, in principle, on a military-political commission, involving a decision to invite the French to join it, had been reached by mid-September. But its plenary powers came under debate. The British and the Americans had established an Allied military administration in Italy which exercised full control of the Italian territory they occupied. As to the rights of the military-political commission, London and Washington sought to restrict them as much as possible. American historian W.H. McNeill pointed out that it was not a part of the British Premier's plans to agree to Russia having equal rights with Britain and the U.S. in shaping Allied policy in Italy.<sup>3</sup>

British and American troops landed in the south of the Apennine Peninsula on September 3, the day the "brief terms" of the capitulation of Italy were signed. On October 13, the Badoglio Government declared war on Germany.

#### THE U.S.S.R. AND POST-WAR PEACE SETTLEMENT

The general fundamental line of Soviet foreign policy was enunciated in the opening stages of the war. Naturally, it was readjusted as the course of events prompted. The actual potentialities of Soviet diplomacy as well as the role and place of the U.S.S.R. in international relations and

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p.149.

<sup>2</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p.577.

<sup>3</sup> W. H. McNeill, *America, Britain & Russia*, p.308.

in the resolution of world problems were directly dependent on developments on the Soviet-German front.

With the Battle of Kursk won, it became evident that the Soviet Union would emerge from the war as one of the world's mightiest Powers.

That had its effect also on relations between the U.S.S.R., on the one hand, and Britain and the U.S. on the other, relations which were rather strained by the middle of 1943. The Battle of Kursk made the Western Allies reconsider their attitude to the U.S.S.R. to a certain extent.

While before, some in the British and the American ruling establishment were inclined to see the Soviet troops almost as their cannon fodder in the war against Germany, and treated the Soviet Union with ill-disguised arrogance now that attitude to the U.S.S.R. was no longer possible. The turn of the tide on the Soviet-German front and, with it, in the whole of the Second World War, brought about a turn of the tide, as it were, in relations between the Three Powers.

As the outlines of victory over the bloc of fascist aggressors shaped up for the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Great Britain, they began to take a closer look at the problems of post-war peace settlement.

In view of the fierce fighting on the Soviet-German front, the Soviet Government was primarily preoccupied with the problems of the prosecution of the war. It was on the battlefield that the world's future had yet to be decided. The Governments of Britain and the U.S., being in no hurry to make any particular contribution towards the achievement of victory, were already eager to reap as much fruit of the victory as possible. The British Government wanted, in particular, to bind the Soviet Government beforehand by certain decisions on a number of major issues.

In the early stages of the war, the United States Government held the view that the solution of all major issues of post-war peace settlement should be put off until the war was over. The U.S. was not active as yet in the hostilities on the European Continent, and therefore could not hope to impose on other nations decisions advantageous to U.S. imperialism. Once the war was over, things would be different. As they saw it in Washington, they would then be in a position to tell their bidding to the war-weakened European nations, including the U.S. Allies. However, after Stalingrad, some people in the United States

felt that the international position of the U.S.S.R. could be strengthened as a result of the war. Washington as well as London began to show interest in the settlement of some issues even before the war ended. R. Sherwood pointed out that following the Battle of Stalingrad, Roosevelt knew that he must now look into the more distant future, into "the actual shape of things to come in the post-war world".<sup>1</sup> That was the view of other American leaders as well.

Early in the war, Soviet foreign policy was concerned primarily with setting up and consolidating a coalition of nations at war with the bloc of fascist aggressors. The Soviet Government's stand on the problems of post-war peace settlement was so far set out in fairly broad outline. For the Soviet Government, the major task in respect of post-war settlement in Europe was to prevent imperialist Germany from starting yet another (third) world war and launching yet another attack on the U.S.S.R. Referring to the basic political objectives in the war, in his speech of November 6, 1942, Stalin outlined the Soviet Government's position as regards Germany. He emphasised that the U.S.S.R. was waging a Great War of Liberation against the Nazi German imperialists. But commenting on Hitler's boastful phrase in his talk with the Turkish General Erkilet: "We shall destroy Russia so that she will never be able to rise again", Stalin said: "Our aim is not to destroy Germany, for it is impossible to destroy Germany, just as it is impossible to destroy Russia. But Hitler's State can and must be destroyed. And our first task, in fact, is to destroy Hitler's State and its moving spirits... Our second task..." he said, "is to destroy Hitler's army... Our third task is to destroy the hated 'new order in Europe'," created by the Nazis who had turned the Continent into a prison of nations.<sup>2</sup>

While pressing for the total defeat of Nazi Germany, the Soviet Government favourably appreciated Roosevelt's statement made in January 1943 that the U.S. considered Germany's unconditional surrender to be indispensable. That would, in particular, have lessened, to some extent, the danger of a deal being struck with Germany by British and American imperialism behind the back of the U.S.S.R.

One of the most complex problems of post-war peace

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<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p.699.

<sup>2</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 1, pp.70-71 (in Russian).



settlement was that of Poland, much on account of the reactionary Polish Government in exile.

A Polish Army (of 6 divisions) began to be formed on Soviet territory under the Soviet-Polish agreements of 1941. It was to have been ready for action by October 1, 1941. But in the summer of 1942, the divisions already formed, with General Anders in command, instead of joining the war on the Soviet-German front and participating, among other operations, in the liberation of Poland, were evacuated to the Middle East upon the initiative of the Polish Government in exile.

The Polish Government in exile used any pretext to lay claims to the Western regions of the Ukraine and Byelorussia. The TASS report of March 2, 1943, stressed that such declarations showed it to have an "imperialistic tendency".<sup>1</sup>

Eden, being well familiar with the activities of the Polish Government in exile, told the Americans in March 1943 that it "has very large ambitions after the war... They say that Russia will be so weakened and Germany crushed that Poland will emerge as the most powerful State in that part of the world."<sup>2</sup>

Subsequently, the position of the reactionary Polish Government in exile with regard to the U.S.S.R. became even more hostile. Its anti-Soviet declarations became so virulent before long that the Soviet Government found it necessary to sever diplomatic relations with it (April 25, 1943).

But that did not mean any change of attitude by the Soviet Union to Poland as a State and to the Polish people. It was well brought out by Stalin's replies of May 4, 1943, to the Moscow Correspondent of *The New York Times* and *The Times* of London Ralph Parker:

"1. Question: 'Does the Government of the U.S.S.R. desire to see a strong and independent Poland after the defeat of Hitler Germany?'

"Answer: 'Unquestionably, it does.'

"2. Question: 'On what foundations is it your opinion that the relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R. should be based after the war?'

"Answer: 'Upon the foundations of solid good-neighborly relations and mutual respect, or, should the Polish people so

<sup>1</sup> *Documents ... on Soviet-Polish Relations*, Vol. 7, p.351 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p.710.

desire, upon the foundations of an alliance providing for mutual assistance..."<sup>1</sup>

The dissolution of the Communist International on May 15, 1943, which was connected with the necessity of an organisational restructuring of the entire international Communist movement in war-time, caused wide repercussions in relations between the U.S.S.R. and other United Nations. The Communist Parties operated in the most diverse circumstances, and they had to take into account, more than ever before, the conditions their countries were in and their particular domestic and foreign policies.<sup>2</sup>

But in the circumstances of the day, the dissolution of the Communist International was of essential importance also in the field of state-to-state relations. Replying on May 28 to the question of Harold King, Moscow correspondent of Reuters, as to the effect the dissolution of the Comintern would have on the future of international relations, Stalin wrote that the dissolution of the Communist International facilitated the organisation of a common onslaught of the United Nations against the common enemy. The Comintern's dissolution exposed the Nazi lie that "Moscow" intended to intervene in the affairs of other nations and to "Bolshevise" them. It exposed the calumny that Communist Parties in various countries were acting not in the interest of their people but on orders from outside; it facilitated the work of patriots in freedom-loving countries for uniting the progressive forces of their respective countries into a single national liberation camp for the fight against fascism; it cleared the way "for the eventual organisation of a community of nations".<sup>3</sup>

One question that arose in the summer of 1943 was that of the attitude of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Britain to the French Committee of National Liberation (FCNL). The British Embassy in Moscow immediately notified the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs that London considered it premature to give any answer to the FCNL's request for recognition.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents ... on Soviet-Polish Relations*, Vol. 7, p. 367 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> See: *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 5, Book I, p.580 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 1, pp. 90-91 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> See: *Soviet-French Relations... Documents*, p.152 (in Russian).

The Soviet Government took up a different stand. It communicated to the British Ambassador Archibald Clark Kerr that "it does not find it expedient to put off the recognition of the Committee because such a postponement can by no means facilitate the rallying of the French anti-Hitler forces ... and considers it necessary that the Committee be recognised."<sup>1</sup> In view of the negative positions of the U.S. and Britain, the Soviet Government, without changing its decision, agreed to put off the recognition for the time being.

The Soviet Union's consistent line led to the FCNL being recognised by the Three Powers shortly afterwards, on August 26. But there were still essential differences in their positions. The Soviet Government recognised the FCNL "as a representative of the national interests of the French Republic and the leader of all French patriots fighting against Hitlerite tyranny".<sup>2</sup> The FCNL expressed its gratitude to the Soviet Government for that friendly step.<sup>3</sup> As to the U.S. and Britain, they recognised the Committee with explicit reservations.

Britain was particularly active as regards peace settlement. On January 16, 1943, Eden submitted a Memorandum to the War Cabinet called "The United Nations Plan". It said that the object of Britain's foreign policy was to maintain her positions as a "World Power". But that was possible only through cooperation with other Great Powers—the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., and the Three Powers had to play the leading role among the United Nations. They were to form a Council that could also have China among its members. An "international police force" was to be created to keep the peace. A Council of Europe as well as a number of other regional Councils were to be established as well.<sup>4</sup>

London was also working out plans to set up various federations of the countries of Eastern Europe. Nominally, those were meant to avert the danger of renewed German aggression, but, in actual fact—and this has been admitted even in official British historical publications—as a counter-balance to the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet-French Relations... Documents*. p.164 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.195.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.215.

<sup>4</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. V, pp.14-18.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21.

The British Foreign Office presented a paper on the future of Germany to the Government as early as March 8, 1943. It reviewed various measures to reduce the power of Germany. The most radical of these was dismemberment, that is, the formation of a number of independent German States. The document explained the possibility of creating three independent States—North Germany, West Germany and South Germany. Yet another version that had been worked out was that of "truncation". It consisted of depriving Germany of large borderland areas so that the remaining "Rump State" would be too weak to endanger the peace in Europe. According to that version, France was to receive a slice of German territory as far as the Rhine, as well as the major industrial areas on the right bank of the Rhine, including the Ruhr. East Prussia could be turned over to Poland, and Schleswig-Holstein, including the Kiel Canal, to Denmark. The document set out other plausible solutions. It attached great importance to action to prevent Communists from coming to power in the Rhineland, not to speak of all Germany.<sup>1</sup>

From March 12 to 30 Eden was in Washington on an express mission of discussing the problems of post-war peace settlement. He said that "the thoughts of his Government, and his own thoughts in particular, were turning toward dismemberment" of Germany.<sup>2</sup> Reporting on the results of his visit to a Cabinet meeting upon his return to London, Eden stated that Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles, with whom he had circumstantially discussed the matter, was "a keen advocate of dismemberment; and the President himself appeared to favour this view". Welles said that Germany could eventually be divided into a number of independent States—e.g., Bavaria, a smaller Prussia, Saxony and North-Western Germany. Austria might subsequently link up with Bavaria. The Ruhr should remain under international supervision for some years after the war. "For the purposes of our military occupation of Germany," Welles said, "immediately after the war, we should make military divisions (with separate Commands, etc.) corresponding broadly to the areas of the separate States into which we hope the Greater Germany would eventually be broken up." Eden remarked that, in his view, this last point

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<sup>1</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy...*, Vol. V, pp.27-29.

<sup>2</sup> H. Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, p.124.

was "a new and valuable contribution".<sup>1</sup> By and large, Roosevelt and Eden concurred in the view that "under any circumstances, Germany must be divided into several states".<sup>2</sup>

Roosevelt objected to "negotiated armistice" after Germany had collapsed. He found it necessary to insist on her "total surrender".<sup>3</sup> That view went together with a perfect understanding in the U.S. that this was becoming possible only because of the action of the Soviet forces. Cordell Hull pointed out in his memoirs that the heroic struggle of the Russians spared the Allies the trouble of seeking a negotiated peace with Germany. Such a peace would have humiliated the Allies and would not have removed the danger of another war.<sup>4</sup> Hopkins laid particular emphasis on the need of preventing Germany going Communist<sup>5</sup>.

Yet another subject that came under discussion during Eden's visit to Washington was the position of Britain and the U.S. with regard to some issues directly involving the interests of the U.S.S.R. Roosevelt suggested that Poland's eastern frontier must be drawn along the Curzon Line since the territory to the east was mainly peopled by Ukrainians.<sup>6</sup>

Roosevelt said they would have to agree to the Baltic States rejoining Russia but that consent should be used as a bargaining counter to get concessions from Russia on other issues. The U.S. President and the British Foreign Secretary believed that Bessarabia must remain within the U.S.S.R. "because it has been Russian territory during most of its history".<sup>7</sup> Eden found it "reasonable" for the U.S.S.R. to insist on the Soviet-Finnish border being drawn up as it was in 1940.<sup>8</sup>

When the issue of the Soviet Western frontiers was considered at a British Cabinet meeting somewhat later, it was found necessary to reckon with the Soviet frontiers as of June 22, 1941, and also take note "of the historic frontiers of Russia before the two wars of aggression unleashed by Germany in 1914 and 1939".<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/38.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. 1943*, Vol. 3, p.16.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.34-35.

<sup>4</sup> *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Vol. II, p.1465.

<sup>5</sup> R. E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p.114.

<sup>6</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/38.

<sup>7</sup> R. E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p.710.

<sup>8</sup> *FRUS. 1943*, Vol. 3, p.14.

<sup>9</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/40.

At the same time, Eden pointed out that "England would probably be too weak to face Russia alone diplomatically".<sup>1</sup> That was one of the arguments used when London brought up with the Americans the question of creating several federations in Europe—the Danubian, the Balkanian and the Scandinavian. What Churchill had in view in the long run was to create a United States of Europe and a European Council in the hope of playing the decisive role in both and making them anti-Soviet entities. The Americans supported the idea of East European federations.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet Government, naturally, realised that Britain intended to use all those federations and other unions against the U.S.S.R. Therefore, it was opposed to the idea.

Eden also discussed the establishment of an international organisation of the United Nations with Roosevelt and other American leaders. Roosevelt suggested that major decision-making in it was to be done by the U.S., Britain, Russia and China.

While agreeing with Roosevelt in point of principle, the British Government disagreed with him, however, as regards China. Churchill wrote, referring to that proposal of the American President, that China was not a world Power equal to Britain, the United States or Russia, and he was not inclined to put his signature to such statements.

Eden drew the conclusion from his talks in Washington that the Americans would be seeking a dominant position in the world as a result of the war. Roosevelt considered, according to Eden, that he could dispose "of the fate of many lands allied no less than enemy".<sup>3</sup>

The Washington talks showed that Britain and the U.S. intended to come to terms on the issues of post-war peace settlement primarily between themselves. But they likewise indicated that London and Washington were beginning to reckon with the fact that they would have to resolve many European and world problems together with the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Government continued to do everything possible by diplomatic means to bring nearer the end of the Second World War. It was working for closer and broader military and political cooperation with the U.S., Britain, and other United Nations. It still held in focus the problem

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS*, 1943, Vol. 3, p.13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.24.

<sup>3</sup> *The Memoirs of Anthony Eden*, pp.430, 433.

of the opening of a Second Front in Europe, that is, of fuller involvement of the Western Allies in the war against the common enemy.

However, the imperialist ruling circles of Britain and the U.S., who wanted not only Germany, but the Soviet Union as well, to be weakened by the war, were still putting off the date for the establishment of a Second Front, that is, putting the brunt of the war against the German Reich on the U.S.S.R. In the meantime they concerned themselves, first and foremost, with strengthening their imperialist position in the Mediterranean and other regions of the world.

As it became obvious that the Soviet Union, far from being defeated in the war, would have its international authority and influence increased, Churchill and other spokesmen of the most reactionary imperialist quarters in Britain and the U.S. were beginning to hatch plans against it. One could see that amply demonstrated by Churchill's idea of an Anglo-American invasion of the Balkans ahead of the Soviet Army.

Because of that policy of the U.S. and Britain, the Soviet Union had to face single-handed again the third summer offensive of the war machine of Nazi Germany and her allies, which was still gathering strength. However, the Soviet Army not only repelled that desperate onslaught by the German Reich, but inflicted such a defeat on it, as a result of the Battle of Kursk and subsequent operations of the summer and autumn of 1943 that it could no longer recover from it. It was the U.S.S.R. that now held the strategic initiative once and for all. So the effect of those engagements was to bring off the major swing in the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War as well as in the whole of the Second World War.

The decisive contribution which the Soviet Union was making towards defeating the bloc of fascist aggressors went far towards strengthening its international positions. In spite of the class-inspired hatred for the U.S.S.R. the ruling imperialist circles of Britain and the U.S. realised that they would still need the Soviet Union as an Ally in the war to defeat Germany and then Japan. Therefore they considered it necessary not only to continue their cooperation with the U.S.S.R. but to come to terms with it about post-war peace settlement. That brought about a qualitatively new stage in relations between the U.S.S.R. and its Western Allies.

## Chapter IV

### THE TEHRAN CONFERENCE

Since there were a number of current international problems to discuss, President Roosevelt began to show interest in a meeting with Stalin. He was sure that he would succeed, once he met Stalin, in having those problems settled in the American way.

As early as May 1943 Roosevelt sent Joseph E. Davies to Moscow. He had been U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. in the second half of the 1930s and favoured Soviet-American cooperation. He had the President's instructions to arrange the President's meeting with the head of the Soviet Government.<sup>1</sup>

Although there had already been a meeting between Churchill and Stalin as well as several meetings of Churchill and Roosevelt before that, the British Premier turned out to be extremely displeased with the prospective Roosevelt-Stalin meeting without his participation. He insisted on his attending that meeting in his correspondence with Roosevelt, actually suggesting a conference of the heads of the Three Allied Powers.

As there was renewed fierce fighting on the Soviet-German front in July, Stalin found it impossible to start on a distant journey to take part in such a conference. Instead, on August 8 he offered to organise a conference of responsible representatives of the Three Powers.<sup>2</sup> It was agreed to hold a conference of the Foreign Ministers of the U.S.S.R., Britain and the U.S. in Moscow in October 1943, to be followed by one of the heads of government.

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. 2, p.63.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.79.



## THE TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS

The Three-Power Conference which met in Moscow from October 19 to 30, 1943, brought together the Vice-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. Vyacheslav Molotov, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, and U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull. The head of the Soviet delegation was elected to chair it.

The Foreign Ministers' Conference opened, following a proposal from the Soviet Government, with a review of the issues related to shortening the duration of the war against Germany and her allies in Europe. With this end in view, the Soviet delegation sought to have Britain and the United States determine the exact date for the opening of the Second Front in Europe.

However, Churchill cabled to Eden to say that he must not commit himself on that issue at the Conference, but was to inform the Soviet Government that the progress of hostilities in Italy could affect the opening date of the Second Front.<sup>1</sup> After hearing Eden's statement to that effect, Stalin said to him: "The Prime Minister has a tendency to take the easy road for himself and leave the difficult jobs to the Russians."<sup>2</sup>

In keeping with Churchill's instructions, the British delegation steered clear of assuming any commitment about the opening of the Second Front. All they did was to provide information about the plans outlined by the Governments of Great Britain and the U.S., pointing out that the plans were subject to amendment. British General Hastings Ismay, speaking on behalf of Britain and the U.S., made the landing of British and American forces in Northern France conditional on a number of factors. He declared that according to the decisions taken by the Governments of Britain and the U.S., the invasion of Northern France was to take place in 1944. However, he made the reservation that the

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<sup>1</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, London, 1952, Vol. 5, pp.254-255, 258.

<sup>2</sup> *The Soviet Union at International Conferences during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945*, Vol. 1, *Moscow Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., and Great Britain (October 19-30, 1943)*, Collected Documents (hereinafter—*Moscow Conference*), Moscow, 1978, p.218 (in Russian).

invasion would be possible only if there was a substantial reduction, by that moment, in the strength of the German fighter force in North-West Europe; if the German reserves in France, Belgium and Holland on the day of the invasion were not more than 12 full strength, first quality, mobile divisions; and if the German military command were prevented from transferring from other fronts more than 15 first quality divisions during the first two months of the operations.<sup>1</sup> The actual object behind those reservations was to make it possible for Britain and the U.S. to say once more at a later date that it was "impossible" to open the Second Front.

The most that the representatives of Britain and the U.S. agreed to do was to include a point in the Top-Secret Protocol of the Conference to reaffirm the validity of the statement made by Churchill and Roosevelt in their message to Stalin early in June 1943 to the effect that British and American forces would undertake an invasion of Northern France in the spring of 1944 subject to the conditions quoted by General Ismay.<sup>2</sup> An official communique about the results of the Conference said that the Governments of the Three Powers had stated that their "primary object is to shorten the duration of the war".<sup>3</sup>

The promise of the Western Allies to open the Second Front in the spring of 1944 was once again hedged about with all kinds of reservations. Considering past experience, the Soviet Government could not take that as a final solution.

The Moscow Conference also reviewed a wide range of issues relating to the structure of peace in the post-war world. It was decided to set up a (London-based) European Advisory Commission consisting of representatives of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Britain. The Commission's first task was to formulate the terms of surrender for the hostile States.<sup>4</sup>

It was the future of Germany that was given major treatment during the discussion of post-war peace arrangements. "The Basic Principles of the Capitulation of Germany", presented by the U.S. Secretary of State, envisaged that Germany surrender unconditionally, the occupation of Germany be effected by the United Nations, all German

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. 1943*, Vol. 1, pp. 775-777.

<sup>2</sup> *Moscow Conference*, pp.366-367 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.336.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.348-349.

armed forces be demobilised, the National-Socialist Party be dissolved and a democratic system established, and that Germany provide reparations. The U.S. proposal also referred to the creation of several separate states on the territory of Germany, i.e. the dismemberment of Germany.<sup>1</sup>

Before leaving for Moscow, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull had thrashed out the German issue with the President. Roosevelt stated categorically that he "favors partition of Germany into three or more states".<sup>2</sup> Following that instruction, Hull declared at the Conference that in high quarters in the United States, there was a general disposition to favour the dismemberment of Germany.<sup>3</sup>

The British Foreign Secretary also spoke up for Germany to be "divided into separate states".<sup>4</sup> That corresponded to the general view expressed at a British Cabinet meeting of October 5 as it discussed the directives for Eden. But it was also stated at the same meeting that "the increasing power of Russia might make it inexpedient to carry too far a policy of breaking up the units of Germany".<sup>5</sup> The British Cabinet actually considered keeping Germany strong enough to be subsequently used against the U.S.S.R., which was an outright betrayal of its Ally. Churchill had been suggesting that, as stated earlier on, ever since the end of 1942, and had been making more and more of it as time went on.

It was found necessary to have Germany disarmed completely, but again with an essential reservation: she was to be allowed to retain "such forces as were required for the maintenance of public order".<sup>6</sup> Hence it was found useful to let German reactionary elements keep enough armed strength to be able to deal with whatever social upheavals might arise in that country at the end of the war. The men in London had a good memory of the revolutions in Germany and in a number of other countries at the end of the First World War.

The Soviet Government expressed its consent at the Conference to the basic U.S. proposals on the German question. Concerning the dismemberment of Germany, Molotov said

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp.289-293.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS*, 1943, Vol. 1, p.542.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 631-632.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 631.

<sup>5</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/40.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

that the Soviet Government had not yet formed any particular judgement on that issue, and was still studying it.<sup>1</sup>

It was decided to refer the issue of the future of Germany to the European Advisory Commission for detailed study.<sup>2</sup>

Yet another question that was considered in detail was that of Italy whose southern part had by then been occupied by British and American troops. The policy of the U.S. and Britain in Southern Italy, which was anti-democratic in character, was damaging to the interests of the anti-fascist coalition. Therefore the Soviet delegation spoke out against separate action by the U.S. and Britain and for a democratic policy towards Italy.

The Soviet Government succeeded in having the Anglo-American Allied military administration close down in Southern Italy. An Advisory Council for Italy, with representatives of the U.S.S.R. on it, was set up. The Conference produced a Declaration on Italy providing that fascism be utterly destroyed and the Italian people given every opportunity to establish governmental and other institutions based upon democratic principles.<sup>3</sup>

A further item discussed at the Conference was the future of Austria. The Soviet delegation emphasised that the Austrian people had the right to independent national existence and to deciding the nation's future at their own discretion. The Declaration on Austria, adopted by the Conference, referred to the wish of the three governments "to see re-established a free and independent Austria". The three Powers declared that they regarded the annexation imposed upon Austria by Germany as null and void.<sup>4</sup>

The Conference examined the Basic Scheme for Administration of Liberated France, agreed between the British and American Governments, whereby American and British troops on entering French territory assumed supreme authority which was tantamount, in fact, to establishing an occupation regime. The Soviet Government did not agree to those plans. Following the proposal by the Soviet Delegation, the Anglo-American draft was referred for examination to the European Advisory Commission.<sup>5</sup>

The Conference worked out the text of a Declaration on

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<sup>1</sup> *Moscow Conference*, p.183 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.341.

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. 1943*, Vol. 1, p.759.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 761.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 751-752.

German Atrocities, providing for the punishment of the major war criminals by joint decision of the Allied Governments as well as for the sending of other war criminals back to the countries in which their abominable deeds were done to be judged and punished according to the laws of these countries. The Declaration carried the signatures of Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill.<sup>1</sup>

During the discussions on the future of the smaller nations of Central and Eastern Europe, the British delegation insisted on a decision being taken to set up confederations of those States. The Soviet Government did not find it possible to agree to such proposals as they failed to meet the interests of the States concerned. Along with that, the Soviet press pointed out that those plans were aimed at reviving the pre-war anti-Soviet policy of "*cordon sanitaire*".<sup>2</sup>

The Declaration on General Security, published at the end of the Conference on behalf of the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., Great Britain and China, said that they were determined "to continue hostilities against those Axis Powers with which they respectively are at war until such Powers have laid down their arms on the basis of unconditional surrender". It provided for the cooperation of the four nations to continue after the war was over. It was found necessary to establish an international organisation for the maintenance of peace and security.<sup>3</sup>

The participants in the Conference, as its concluding Protocol stated, agreed to inform each other immediately of any peace-feelers from enemy States and to consult together with a view to concerting their action in regard to such approaches.<sup>4</sup>

The Moscow Conference prompted consideration of the possible participation of the U.S.S.R. in the defeat of the Japanese aggressors. The U.S., which despaired of bringing its war against Japan to a prompt and victorious end on its own, was pressing for the Soviet Union to enter it. The head of the U.S. Military Mission to the U.S.S.R., John R. Deane, who arrived in Moscow in the autumn of 1943, wrote that his primary long-range objective was to obtain

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. 1943*, Vol. 1, p. 769.

<sup>2</sup> *Izvestia*, November 18, 1943.

<sup>3</sup> *Moscow Conference*, pp. 346-348 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> *FRUS. 1943*, Vol. 1, pp. 753-754.

Soviet participation in the war against Japan.<sup>1</sup> The instructions received by Deane from the Combined Chiefs of Staff of the United States and Great Britain on the eve of the Moscow Conference stated: "Russia's full participation in the war against Japan after the defeat of Germany is essential to the prompt and crushing defeat of Japan at far less cost to the United States and Great Britain".<sup>2</sup>

During his conversation with Cordell Hull on October 30, as the Conference ended, Stalin told him that the U.S.S.R. was ready to take part in the war against Japan and help defeat the Far Eastern enemy after the routing of Germany. As Hull wrote in his memoirs, Stalin had made that statement "emphatically, it was entirely unsolicited, and he asked nothing in return". Hull considered it to be "a statement of transcendent importance".<sup>3</sup> He also reported to Washington that the head of the Soviet Government had shown that he was very much in favour of cooperation with the U.S. and Britain.<sup>4</sup>

Eden cabled to Churchill from Moscow stating that "the Russians really wanted to establish relations with Great Britain and the United States on a footing of permanent friendship and they had done their best to meet British and American views on a number of points".<sup>5</sup> In a speech to the House of Commons, after the conference the British Foreign Secretary pointed out that the results of the conference exceeded his expectations.<sup>6</sup> Hull returned to Washington confident that the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. could and should find common ground on major world problems, and that this would be a matter of paramount importance in the post-war period as well. In his memoirs Churchill wrote about the Moscow Conference: "There had been many signs during the Conference that the Soviet Government sincerely desired permanent friendship with Britain and the United States. They had met us on a number of points, both large and small, about which we foresaw difficulties... The mounting

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<sup>1</sup> John R. Deane, *The Strange Alliance*, The Viking Press, New York, 1947 p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> George Alexander Lensen, *The Strange Neutrality. Soviet-Japanese Relations During the Second World War. 1941-1945*, The Diplomatic Press, Tallahassee, Florida, 1972, p.259.

<sup>3</sup> *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Vol. II, pp.1309, 1310.

<sup>4</sup> *FRUS*, 1943, Vol. 1, p.685.

<sup>5</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, p.594.

<sup>6</sup> W. H. McNeill, *America, Britain & Russia*, p.336.

deadlock in our working with the Soviet Union had in part been removed." Conditions had thus shaped up for a meeting of the heads of government of the three major Allied Powers.<sup>1</sup>

These statements by representatives of the Western Powers amounted to admitting that the Soviet Government's constructive position had largely contributed towards the success of the Moscow Conference.

The Moscow Conference was the first tripartite meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the United States during the Second World War. It was a step forward in Three-Power cooperation. The Conference adopted a number of essential decisions relating to the progress of the war as well as peace settlement and the maintenance of international peace and security in the post-war period. But, on the other hand, the Conference brought to light fundamental differences between the position of the U.S.S.R. and that of its Allies which led to some of the questions discussed being left unsettled. By and large, however, the Conference carried out a large amount of work paving the way for a meeting of the heads of government of the Three Powers.

### ON THE EVE OF THE TEHRAN CONFERENCE

Considering the major turning point achieved in the course of the war, indicating the approaching victory of the U.S.S.R. and its Allies over the bloc of fascist aggressors, the Soviet Government began to give more attention to the political problems the war had generated. The Soviet Union's objectives in post-war peace settlement were set out by Stalin in his speech on the 26th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, on November 6, 1943. He said that the U.S.S.R., together with its Allies, was to:

free the peoples of Europe from the Nazi invaders and lend them assistance in rebuilding their countries;

establish such an order in Europe as would exclude the eventuality of renewed aggression by Germany;

develop long-term economic, political and cultural coop-

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<sup>1</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. V, *Closing the Ring*, Cassell & Co., Ltd., London, 1952, pp.261, 266.

eration of the peoples of Europe, based on mutual confidence and mutual aid.<sup>1</sup>

This programme showed that the Soviet Government considered the coalition of the U.S.S.R., the U.S., Great Britain and other countries by no means a makeshift alliance, and that it was interested in cooperation with all its member-states after the war as well.

Three-Power agreement about their meeting in Tehran had been predetermined, above all, by the common task they had before them—that of defeating Germany, Japan and their allies in aggression. At the same time, they considered it necessary to discuss the most important issues of post-war settlement.

As the Moscow Conference of the Foreign Ministers had shown, the Soviet Union was guided by a determination to hasten the end of the war as much as possible and so reduce the death-toll and the suffering. It considered that the earliest possible opening of the Second Front in Western Europe by the U.S. and Britain and their actual full-scale involvement in action to defeat Nazi Germany were the chief means of achieving that. In that light, the Soviet delegation's prime concern at the Tehran Conference was to secure a firm and final decision about the establishment of a Second Front in Europe in the spring of 1944.

That proved far from easy to achieve since the British imperialist governing quarters were still bent on putting off the cross-Channel operation and bolstering up their imperial positions in the Mediterranean.

In advance of the Tehran Conference Roosevelt and Churchill met Chiang Kaishek, the head of the Chinese Government, in Cairo.

The Combined Chiefs of Staff of the United States and Great Britain sat there at the same time. A note by the British Chiefs of Staff, called "‘Overlord’ and the Mediterranean" was brought before it on November 25. They admitted that, as in previous years, their forecasts about the course of events on the Soviet-German front had proved wrong, that is, they had again underestimated the strength and power of the Soviet forces. "The Russian campaign has succeeded beyond all hope or expectations," the Note said, "and their victorious advance continues." Besides, it said, Italy had

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 1, p. 103 (in Russian).



been knocked out of the war. The British Chiefs of Staff sought to prove, therefore, that the overall situation had changed so much as to prompt a revision of the British and American strategic plans which had been agreed at the conference in Quebec in August. Without questioning the expediency of Overlord, they urged yet another postponement of that operation and, besides, tried to prove that it could, after all, turn out to be impossible. "We must not however," the note said, "regard 'Overlord' on a fixed date as the pivot of our whole strategy on which all else turns. In actual fact, the German strength in France next Spring may, at one end of the scale, be something which makes 'Overlord' completely impossible." Now, the stake on Overlord alone, while by no means assuring its success, "will inevitably paralise action in other theatres". So the conclusion was that there was no point in sticking to any particular date for Overlord or to any particular number of divisions in the assault and follow-up.<sup>1</sup>

Another document, submitted on the same day, attempted to prove that there was no serious difference in weather conditions in the Channel from May through September. On that account, the invasion might well have been put off until September, but mid-July was the best time from the point of view of weather. The conclusion was: "There does not appear to be any overriding reason why the assault could not be carried out up to about the middle of July."<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the Note "Entry of Turkey into the War" said that for Turkey to declare war on Germany would mean sparking off hostilities in the Balkans which "would involve the postponement of 'Overlord' to a date which might be as late as the 15th of July".<sup>3</sup>

These documents indicated that the British Government intended to use the British and American talks at Cairo to put off the cross-Channel invasion from May 1, as had been decided previously, to the middle of July, 1944. But it did not mean the British Government was really determined to carry out Overlord even by that date.

Speaking of the British plans, George Marshall told at a meeting of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff that "the British

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Prem. 3/136/5, Vol. 2, pp. 77-78.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 79-80.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 106-107.

might like to ditch 'Overlord' now in order to go into the Balkans".<sup>1</sup>

Churchill persisted in his Mediterranean and Balkan strategy. He maintained that full-scale action by British and American forces in that region could have caused Turkey to enter the war and Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary to surrender to Britain and the U.S.

Churchill wanted to come to agreement on all those issues with the Americans first so as to make common cause with them in negotiations with Soviet representatives.<sup>2</sup>

A point of tremendous importance to President Roosevelt, along with the defeat of the Third Reich, was that of concerted action of the Three Powers in the struggle against the Far Eastern aggressor—Japan.

The forces of the United States in the Pacific theatre were augmented and began, step by step, to capture the islands which had been occupied by the Japanese. But the American troops were still thousands of miles away from Japan and it was obvious that her defeat was still a long way off and would involve immense sacrifices and difficulties. The U.S. understood perfectly well how complex and time-consuming could be the task of wiping out the powerful Japanese land forces, including those stationed in China, Manchuria and Korea.

One object considered at the Anglo-American talks in Cairo was a landing of their forces in Japan but as late as the second half of 1946 or even early 1947.<sup>3</sup> The landing was to be followed up by the heaviest fighting yet. Things would be entirely different if the Soviet Union took part in defeating the Japanese aggressors. Roosevelt was keen on coming to terms about that with the Soviet delegation in Tehran.

Chiang Kaishek was also invited to attend the Roosevelt-Churchill meeting in Cairo on November 22. Since the U.S. did not consider it possible so far to base the planning of its action in the Far East on the assumption that the U.S.S.R. would get involved in the war against Japan, Washington attached great importance to keeping China in the war, that is, preventing her from giving it up. Chiang Kaishek's armies conducted no full-scale action against

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<sup>1</sup> John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V, August 1943-September 1944, p.117.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.156.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.159.

Japan, though they did pin down rather sizeable Japanese forces. Therefore, in Cairo, Roosevelt promised to Chiang Kaishek to carry through, in 1944, an operation to seize the Andaman Islands off the shores of Burma. They could subsequently become a base for intensified action by the U.S. Armed Forces in that region and for opening up the way to China through Burma.

In view of that new operation, U.S. Chiefs of Staff, in accordance with Roosevelt's instructions, were willing to accept the British proposals and agree to a postponement of Overlord. Basing himself on the reminiscences of Churchill, Admiral William Leahy, Robert Sherwood and John Deane, American historian W. H. McNeill stated that on the eve of the Tehran Conference, Roosevelt was no longer so sure as he had been that Overlord was the best of all possible plans and was pondering over the idea, so strongly urged by Churchill, of an expanded Mediterranean campaign.<sup>1</sup>

The Chief of Staff to the British Defence Secretary, General Hastings Ismay, also stated in a note of November 26 to Churchill that the United States Chiefs of Staff "seemed to accept a postponement of 'Overlord' with equanimity", but had direct orders from the President that the capture of the Andaman Islands had got to be carried out at the appointed time.<sup>2</sup>

On November 28, the Combined Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. and Britain ruled (with Roosevelt's consent) that the British proposals for operations in the Mediterranean should be accepted "for negotiations with the Soviets". It was understood that these operations "necessitate a delay in the target date for Overlord". That was all the American and British delegations had to their credit as they arrived in Tehran.

At the same time, Roosevelt and Churchill began to show concern lest they should be too late to invade Northern France which could weaken their positions in considering the questions of post-war settlement in Europe. "At that, by next spring, the way things are going in Russia now," American President said, "maybe a second front won't be necessary."<sup>3</sup> Roosevelt told the Chiefs of Staff on his way to Cairo that the Anglo-American forces were to occupy France, Belgium, Luxemburg and also much of Germany. "We should go as far as Berlin..." he emphasised. "The

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<sup>1</sup> W. H. McNeill, *America, Britain & Russia*, p.341.

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, Prem. 3/136/5, Vol. 1, p.75.

<sup>3</sup> Elliot Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, p.156.

Soviets could then take the territory to the east thereof. The United States should have Berlin."<sup>1</sup> American General Thomas T. Handy wrote that "victory in the war will be meaningless unless we also win the peace. We must be strong enough militarily at the peace table to cause our demands to be respected."<sup>2</sup> The U.S. military authorities were planning such a build-up of military power in the course of the war and wanted the United States to have such positions in the world by the end of the war as to have its way at the peace table.

Therefore, the military authorities of Britain and the U.S. stepped up their preparations for an emergency landing in Germany to meet the eventuality of her unexpected collapse or surrender. That was the plan for Operation Rankin. Case C of that plan stated that the object was to occupy as quickly as possible the most important areas of Germany. U.S. forces were to occupy the territory of Germany from the Swiss frontier to Düsseldorf, and the British forces, the territory of Germany from the Ruhr to Lübeck. The Americans also intended to bring under their control the territory of France and Belgium, and the British that of Holland, Denmark, and Norway. The forces allotted for Overlord were to be made available for Operation Rankin.<sup>3</sup> The Rankin plan also provided for a landing of British and American paratroopers in Berlin two hours after Germany's surrender in case no American and British troops were present in France by that time.<sup>4</sup>

The Heads of Government of the Three Powers were to meet when the Soviet Army had inflicted such defeats on the hard-core of the Wehrmacht and scored such a success that the outcome of the Second World War became a foregone conclusion. However, the Anglo-American forces in Italy, having considerable superiority in strength, were actually marking time.

In a conversation with the new U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., Averell Harriman (on November 6, 1943), Vyacheslav Molotov pointed out that the Soviet Union was "displeased by the fact that operations in Italy have been suspended", permitting the Germans to move their troops from Italy and from the Balkans to the Soviet-German front.

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran. 1943*, p.254.

<sup>2</sup> M. Matloff, *Strategic Planning... 1943-1944*, p.282.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.226-227.

<sup>4</sup> *FRUS. 1943*, Vol.3, p.28.

"True," he said, "our forces are gaining ground nevertheless, but they are doing so at the cost of heavy losses."<sup>1</sup>

American historian Adam B. Ulam notes that the meeting of the Heads of Government of the Three Powers took place against the background of "a certain feeling of guilt and inferiority" of the U.S. and Britain toward their Soviet Ally and, simultaneously, "the greatest psychological advantage of the U.S.S.R. over her allies".<sup>2</sup>

## THE TEHRAN CONFERENCE OPENED. SECOND FRONT IN DEBATE

The Tehran Conference of the leaders of the Three Allied Powers—the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Great Britain (code-named "Eureka") began on November 28, 1943. It was attended by Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill. The Soviet delegation also included Molotov, Voroshilov and other diplomatic and military leaders.

There was no definitely agreed agenda fixed in advance. The Heads of Government brought up whatever questions they found to be most important to discuss in the course of the negotiations.

The limelight was on the issue of the opening of a Second Front in Northern France by Britain and the U.S. The Soviet delegation in Tehran was most consistently pressing for a definite date to be fixed for the cross-Channel operation.

Roosevelt was the first to speak. He referred to the war in the Pacific, thus demonstrating the importance the U.S. attached to that theatre.

Then, turning to the combat operations in Europe, Roosevelt summed up the position the Americans and the British had concerted in Cairo. He pointed out that during his meeting with the British Premier at Quebec, they had drawn up a plan proceeding from the assumption that the cross-Channel operation was to be carried out around May 1, 1944. But there were many other possible points of operation

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<sup>1</sup> *The Soviet Union at International Conferences During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945*, Vol. 2, *Tehran Conference of the Leaders of the Three Allied Powers—the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A. and Great Britain (November 28-December 1, 1943)*, Documents (hereinafter—*The Tehran Conference*), Moscow, 1978, p.67 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence. The History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-67*, New York, 1969, pp.352, 353.

by British and American forces, Roosevelt went on to say, namely, Italy, the Adriatic and Aegean Seas and Turkey if she entered the war. If the U.S. and Britain went ahead with large-scale landing operations in the Mediterranean, the cross-Channel landing "might involve a delay of one, two or three months".<sup>1</sup>

Considering the concern Roosevelt had shown over the prospect of war in the Pacific, Stalin made a statement, as soon as he began to speak, which was of major import not only for the outcome of the Tehran Conference but for the entire subsequent strategy of the U.S. and Britain in the war. He pointed out that the Soviet forces were wholly engaged in combat operations against Germany for the time being. And he went on to say: "Our forces in the Far East are more or less sufficient for defensive purposes only, but would have to be increased threefold at least before they would be adequate for offensive operations. That could be possible once Germany was finally defeated. *Then we shall be able by our common front to beat Japan.*"<sup>2</sup>

Turning to the action of Great Britain and the U.S. in Europe, the head of the Soviet Government said that the Italian theatre was of no significance in the context of subsequent operations against Germany as the Alps blocked the way for advance towards Germany. Stalin suggested that Overlord, that is, the invasion of Northern France, should be the major operation of the Anglo-American forces in 1944, with a landing in Southern France to support it.<sup>3</sup>

Churchill argued that Operation Overlord was still six months away. He said it was undesirable for the Anglo-American troops to remain idle throughout that period of time. The British Premier set out possible options for action in the Eastern Mediterranean and in the Balkans.<sup>4</sup> At that point, Roosevelt added that he had thought of a "possible operation at the head of the Adriatic..."<sup>5</sup> Official American publications about the Second World War infer that Roosevelt thus helped Churchill's argument.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. Diplomatic Papers. The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943*, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1961, pp.488-489.

<sup>2</sup> *The Tehran Conference*, p.95. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.97, 100.

<sup>4</sup> *FRUS. Diplomatic Papers. The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943*, p. 493.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.493

<sup>6</sup> M. Matloff, *Strategic Planning... 1943-1944*, p. 361.

At first, Churchill remarked only in passing that the continued operations in the Mediterranean might cause a certain delay of Overlord.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, he tried to prevent the actual timing of the operation. That would have given him a chance to drag out the opening of the Second Front for a few more months under all kinds of pretexts and even declare that, in view of the worsening weather conditions at sea or for some other reason, the cross-Channel operation in 1944 was impossible.

In those circumstances, there was a heated debate between Stalin and Churchill during the second session of the Conference (November 29):

"*Stalin*. If possible, it would be good to undertake Operation Overlord during the month of May, say, on the 10th, 15th, or 20th.

"*Churchill*. I cannot give such a commitment.

"*Stalin*. If Overlord were to be undertaken in August, as Churchill said yesterday, nothing would come out of that operation because of the bad weather during that period. April and May are the most convenient months for Overlord.

"*Churchill*. ...I do not think that many of the possible operations in the Mediterranean should be neglected as insignificant merely for the sake of avoiding a delay in Overlord for two or three months.

"*Stalin*. The operations in the Mediterranean Churchill is talking about are really only diversions."<sup>2</sup>

All the diplomatic dodges of the British Premier were of no avail. The Soviet delegation conclusively proved that his arguments were inconsistent.

When it transpired in the course of the negotiations that the British and American leaders had not yet agreed as to who would be the supreme commander of Operation Overlord, Stalin remarked that if that question had not been settled, talking of Overlord was pointless. He insisted on the operation commander being appointed as soon as possible.<sup>3</sup>

The discussion went on mainly between Stalin and Churchill, with Roosevelt occasionally making vague remarks, but Roosevelt "did not appear completely indifferent ... to the possibilities of Mediterranean ventures, particularly in the Adriatic."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Tehran Conference*, p.97 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.129-130.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>4</sup> M. Matloff, *Strategic Planning... 1943-1944*, p.364.

The discussion became extremely strained as the session was drawing to a close. Churchill suggested that the British together with the Americans should work out their proposals about the directives for the military committee.<sup>1</sup>

The military committee, consisting of Kliment Voroshilov of the U.S.S.R., William Leahy and George Marshall of the United States, Alan Brooke and Charles Portal of Britain, had already met in the morning of that day, but that first war-time meeting of top military leaders of the three Allied Powers did nothing to bring the decision on the opening of the Second Front any nearer.

The British Premier suggested that the directives were to be framed not by the three of them—Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, but without the participation of Soviet representatives. Churchill hoped that, just as it had been during the talks at Cairo, the U.S. President would back up his strategic plans in principle, whereupon they would submit their agreed opinion to the Soviet representatives. Although it was a tripartite Conference, the decision on the major issue was to be taken by the British and the Americans only. Stalin was actually offered to sit aside and wait for Churchill and Roosevelt to concert their position.

After hearing what Churchill had to propose, Stalin asked: "How many more days will this Conference continue?"<sup>2</sup> That was a hint all those present understood perfectly well, of course.

Trying to find a way out of that awkward predicament, Roosevelt suggested that the three of them should give the directives to the military committee.<sup>3</sup>

Stalin had exercised the utmost restraint at the Conference until then. He was calm and well-mannered even at the most critical moments, while Churchill would often lose his temper and sometimes could not control himself at all.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See: *The Tehran Conference*, p.131 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.132.

<sup>4</sup> See: V. M. Berezhevskov, *History in the Making*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1983, p.279.

An idea of the top-level American view of the Soviet leaders is provided by Admiral Leahy's recollections of the impression Stalin produced on him at the opening session of the Conference: "Most of us, before we met him, thought he was a bandit leader who had pushed himself up to the top of his government. That impression was wrong. We knew at once that we were dealing with a highly intelligent man who



But now Stalin declared emphatically: "The military committee is unnecessary. All matters can be solved here, at the Conference." Then he added: "We, Russians, are limited by the time of our stay in Tehran. We can stay on for the 1st of December, but on the 2nd we must go away. The President remembers that we have agreed to come for three or four days."

In those circumstances, Roosevelt no longer found it possible to keep silent. He struck a compromise posture, as it were, but in actual fact was still supporting Churchill. For example, he agreed that Operation Overlord must dominate the action of the Anglo-American forces, making the reservation that the auxiliary operations in the Mediterranean "can delay Overlord".

At that point, Stalin declared: "The Russians want to know the date Overlord will be mounted so as to be able to *prepare their blow at the Germans*."<sup>1</sup>

Since there was still no progress, Stalin, eschewing diplomatic convention, said what he thought: "I would like the British to say whether they believe in Operation Overlord, or they are just talking about it to reassure the Russians." That was a reminder that Churchill and Roosevelt had for two years been making their promises about the opening of a Second Front, which they considered, in fact, to be nothing but "moral support", and which they by no means intended to keep. Was that unworthy game still going on?

Churchill's reply meant, as a matter of fact, that it was, indeed. If the conditions specified at the Moscow Conference should exist, he said, it would be England's duty to hurl every ounce of strength she had across the Channel at the Germans.<sup>2</sup>

In that way, Churchill made yet another reservation regarding the need for the existence of the numerous conditions, laid down by the British Government at the Moscow Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the Three Powers, which he could invoke subsequently when stating that a cross-Channel invasion was impossible. Moreover, he produced no firm assurances that even with those conditions present Operation Overlord would be carried out.

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spoke well and was determined to get what he wanted for Russia." (William D. Leahy, *I Was There*, Whittlesey House, McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, London, Toronto, 1950, p. 205).

<sup>1</sup> *The Tehran Conference*, pp. 132-134. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran*, p. 552.

To save the situation, Roosevelt declared that everybody was very hungry by then. He offered to adjourn the session to be present at the luncheon which was given by Marshal Stalin on that day. Roosevelt added that Anglo-American proposals would be ready by next day's lunch scheduled for 13.30.<sup>1</sup>

That was a crucial day at the Conference. Tension was running high, coming to breaking point. Churchill went on insisting on the Conference approving his Mediterranean strategy which could have no other effect than to involve a long delay, if not a break of the commitment to open the Second Front in Europe in 1944 too. The head of the Soviet Government insisted just as hard on a final decision being taken about the Anglo-American cross-Channel operation in the spring of 1944.

It was George Marshall and other U.S. Chiefs of Staff that played a positive role under the circumstances. Their major concern was to secure Germany's military defeat and they influenced Roosevelt's position to some extent. American historian Matloff points out that the President "was under strong pressure from his military advisers ... and in the end he held through."<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Chiefs of Staff understood perfectly well the fundamental importance for the Americans of Stalin's statement at the opening session of the Conference that, following Germany's surrender, the Soviet Union would share in defeating the Japanese aggressors. Considering the two years' experience of what proved to be by no means an easy war with Japan for the United States, they figured out that the entry of the U.S.S.R. into the war in the Far East would radically alter the entire strategic situation in that region and would make the plans for the defeat of Japan definitely practicable. But the first thing to do for the earliest possible defeat of Japan was to vanquish Nazi Germany, that is, carry out the cross-Channel operation. They realised quite well the importance that the statement by the head of the Soviet Government about a simultaneous blow at the German forces on the Soviet-German front as well would have for the success of Overlord.

The Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff met in the morning of November 30. They had to acknowledge that it had proved impossible to get the Soviet Government to

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran*, p. 552.

<sup>2</sup> M. Matloff, *Strategic Planning... 1943-1944*, p. 364.

agree to the decisions they had taken at Cairo (on the eve of the Tehran Conference). Evidently, having, at long last, obtained Roosevelt's go-ahead, the U.S. Chiefs of Staff became more insistent during the talks with the British, although they did not unequivocally suggest fixing the date right away for the cross-Channel invasion. Even the Chief of the British Imperial General Staff, General Alan Brooke said that "unless we could give the Russians a firm date for Overlord, there would be no point in proceeding with the Conference". Admiral Ernest King, Commander-in-Chief of the United States Fleet, objected to the recurrent British argument that in the event of the decision being taken about the cross-Channel invasion in the spring of 1944, the Anglo-American forces in the Mediterranean would be condemned to stay idle. He emphasised that if the Overlord date was postponed from May 1 to July 15, a still larger force, that is, 35 divisions, concentrated in Britain for that operation, would stay inactive.

British Air Chief Marshal C. Portal found it necessary to admit: "Marshal Stalin's statement that the Russians would enter the war against Japan when Germany had been defeated, seemed to alter the whole relative importance of the war in Europe and the Pacific", and increase that of the operations in Europe at that juncture.<sup>1</sup> That was, notably, a criticism of the Americans who were going to stage an operation to seize the Andaman Islands in the spring of 1944, thereby drawing off sizeable forces from Overlord.

Finally, the Chiefs of Staff agreed to begin Operation Overlord on June 1, 1944, but decided to tell the Soviet representatives that it would begin in May.<sup>2</sup> British and American imperialists decided to deceive their Soviet Ally again. As one can see from the comments in the course of that meeting, they wanted the spring offensive of 1944 to be started first not by Anglo-American forces, but by Soviet forces and the Nazis would then throw their reserves into action on the Soviet front.

While the military were in session, Churchill called on Stalin. In an attempt to find an excuse for his course of action, he tried hard to prove that the plans for yet another postponement of the cross-Channel operation were by no means connected with operations in the Mediterranean but

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Prem. 3/136/5.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943*, p.564.

with the operation to capture the Andaman Islands projected by Roosevelt. In actual fact, it was both operations that most adversely affected Operation Overlord.

According to a transcript of that conversation of the two Heads of Government, Churchill had said that when Marshal Stalin made his historic statement that, after Germany had been defeated, Russia would enter the struggle against Japan, he, Churchill, immediately presumed the Americans would find an opportunity to procure some landing force either in the Mediterranean or in the Pacific to ensure Operation Overlord. The point was that the Americans were very sensitive to the situation in the Pacific, but now there was a good prospect for fighting against Japan after Germany's defeat.<sup>1</sup> Churchill acknowledged the role which Stalin's statement had played in getting Roosevelt to change his position at the Conference.

During the luncheon of the three Heads of Government, Roosevelt told Stalin that the British and the Americans planned Operation Overlord for May 1944, noting that the most suitable time would be from May 15 to 20.<sup>2</sup>

Since the date for Operation Overlord had finally been fixed, the situation at the Conference radically changed for the better. What followed was a really constructive discussion of military as well as certain political issues.

The concluding document of the Conference "Military Conclusions of the Tehran Conference" (which were not for publication), recorded that "Operation Overlord would be launched during May 1944, in conjunction with an operation against Southern France". The document also contained Stalin's statement that "the Soviet forces would launch an offensive at about the same time with the object of preventing the German forces from transferring from the Eastern to the Western Front". It was also agreed that the military staffs of the Three Powers "should henceforward keep in close touch with each other in regard to the impending operations in Europe".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Tehran Conference*, p.137 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.140-141.

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran*, p.652. This decision of the Conference was top secret. But it soon became known to the German Government because the British Ambassador in Turkey, Knatchbull-Hugessen had a servant who was a German spy. The documents he had photographed and passed on to German Ambassador F. Papen included a summary of the decisions of the Tehran Conference (Franz von Papen, *Memoirs*, p. 517).

The Declaration of the Three Powers published at the end of the Conference proclaimed: "We have concerted our plans for the destruction of the German forces. We have reached complete agreement as to the scope and timing of the operations which will be undertaken from the East, West and South.

"The common understanding which we have here reached guarantees that victory will be ours."<sup>1</sup>

The firm decision taken at the Tehran Conference to open the Second Front in Europe in the spring of 1944, was of tremendous importance. It was bringing nearer the victory over the fascist bloc. It is likewise necessary to note that the issue that had seriously impaired relations between the U.S.S.R., on the one hand, and Britain and the U.S. on the other, for two years had been finally settled. The alliance acquired a new dimension when they concerted their plans for combat operations.

The major issue under discussion at the Conference was tackled on November 30.

Along with problems of military cooperation of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Britain, the Conference examined some of the post-war peace arrangements. The Soviet Government was very much interested in having a lasting and durable peace established after the war and the reliable security of the U.S.S.R. ensured. To that end, it was necessary, above all, to make it impossible for imperialist Germany to start another world war. She had twice attempted, during a quarter of a century, to establish by force of arms her domination of Europe and, indeed, of the rest of the world. The Soviet Union considered it necessary to take most effective steps to prevent German imperialism and militarism in general from ever again setting out on the path of war, from committing yet another criminal attack on the U.S.S.R. or on other countries, and endangering the existence of other States, and of millions and millions of people.

### POST-WAR GERMANY

Great attention was given at the Conference to the post-war organisation of Germany. Stalin noted that it had taken Germany only 21 years, after the end of the First World War, to start another war. A ban on munitions production

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 640.

in Germany would be insufficient as she could circumvent it, regain her potential and restart acts of aggression. More effective measures had to be taken.<sup>1</sup>

Asked by Stalin to say what proposals they had to make in regard of that problem, Roosevelt replied right away: "Division of Germany." To stimulate the discussion on this subject, he remarked, he would like to set out the plan he had evolved some months ago for the "division of Germany in five parts". Here is this plan, as it was set out by Roosevelt at the Conference:

All Prussia was to be rendered as small and weak as possible. Prussia must constitute the first independent part of Germany. The second part of Germany was to include Hannover and the north-west section of Germany. The third part was to be Saxony and the Leipzig area. The fourth part — Hesse province, Darmstadt, Kassel and areas south of the Rhine as well as the old cities of Westphalia. The fifth part was to consist of Bavaria, Baden and Württemberg. Each of these five parts should be self-governed. Besides the area of the Kiel Canal and the City of Hamburg were to be treated as a separate region to be controlled by the United Nations or the four Powers. The Ruhr and the Saar were to be brought under control either of the United Nations or the guardianship of all Europe.<sup>2</sup>

Churchill put forward his own plan for the dismemberment of Germany. He said he had two considerations in mind: first, "the separation of Prussia from the rest of the Reich", and second, the detachment of Germany's southern provinces—Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg and the Palatinate from the Saar to Saxony inclusive. He suggested setting up a Danube Confederation to comprise all those southern provinces of Germany.<sup>3</sup>

Following a proposal by the head of the Soviet Government, it was decided to refer the question of Germany to the European Advisory Commission for further study.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time Stalin spoke up against the plans to create new associations of States in Europe which Churchill clearly saw as a way to preserve the old reactionary scheme of things in the countries they were to comprise and, besides,

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<sup>1</sup> *The Tehran Conference*, p. 117 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 165-166.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

he intended to use them for anti-Soviet purposes. He pointed out that there was no point in creating an unviable confederation of Danubean countries. Hungary and Austria were to exist as independent states.<sup>1</sup> No decision on the issue was taken.

## THE POLISH QUESTION

The Conference also discussed the Polish question. The Soviet Government consistently worked for the restoration of a strong and independent Poland after the end of the war. At the same time, the Soviet Union did not want the restored Polish state to resemble the reactionary, aggressive and imperialist Poland that had existed between the two world wars.

The Soviet Union remembered the active participation of Poland under Pilsudski in the crusades, organised by imperialism (notably by Churchill), against the newborn Soviet State and the seizure of the Western regions of the Ukraine and Byelorussia by the Polish aggressors in 1920. In connection with the plans now being harboured by Churchill for the establishment of various federations of Poland and other countries of Eastern Europe, one could by no means fail to recall the numerous attempts of British and French imperialists, with the active involvement of the Polish military, to tack together various anti-Soviet military blocs in the 1920s. There was even fresher memory of the closest collaboration of Polish imperialism and German Nazism after they had signed their declaration of friendship and non-aggression in January 1934, including cooperation in carving up Czechoslovakia during the Munich days as well as in working out the plans for a joint war against the Soviet Union (involving Japan, Finland, Romania and other countries).<sup>2</sup> Naturally, nobody in Moscow had forgotten that Poland had taken up an infinitely obstructionist stand during the Anglo-Franco-Soviet talks. For the Polish rulers' refusal of all cooperation with the U.S.S.R. was one of the reasons which had caused those talks to be broken off. Pre-war reactionary Poland preferred her own destruction to the prevention of war and cooperation with the Soviet

<sup>1</sup> *The Tehran Conference*, p.166 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> See: Vilnis Sipols, *Diplomatic Battles Before World War II*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1982.

Union as a way to ensure the existence of Poland. Poland's national disaster was consequent not only on the aggressive ambitions of German imperialism but also on the policy of the reactionary bourgeois-landlord governing quarters of Poland which was nothing short of betrayal of the national interests of the Polish people.

That policy of Poland throughout her entire existence in between the wars constantly created a tremendous danger for the U.S.S.R. as well. But as long as Poland existed, Germany had no direct border with the Soviet Union which she could cross to attack it. The destruction of Poland, following the short-sighted and reckless foreign policy of her ruling circles, opened up an opportunity for Nazi Germany to attack the U.S.S.R. as well.

Taking all that into account, the Soviet Government wanted to see a restored, new Poland as a sufficiently strong state that could defend its independence in case of a resurgence of the aggressive policy of German imperialism. In that case, German troops would have found their way to the Soviet borders barred. Along with that, the Soviet Union was most anxious to see Poland no longer used as an anti-Soviet strike force and an ally of the camp of imperialism across the Western borders of the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Government attached major importance to having a reborn Polish State maintain friendly relations with the U.S.S.R. and to establishing close cooperation between them in ensuring the security of both nations after the war.

It is these considerations that the Soviet delegation guided itself by at the Tehran Conference as well. Stalin declared at the Conference that "Russia is interested even more than other Powers in maintaining good relations with Poland because Poland is Russia's neighbour. We are for the restoration, for the consolidation of Poland".<sup>1</sup>

The Polish question came up in two aspects at the Conference. First, the British and American delegations wanted diplomatic relations to be resumed between the U.S.S.R. and the Polish Government in exile. Second, it was necessary to settle the issue of Poland's frontiers.

Driving the German troops out of the U.S.S.R. the Soviet armies were approaching the Polish frontier. It was not long before it would enter the territory of Poland, beating and chasing the enemy. The Polish Government in exile wanted

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<sup>1</sup> *The Tehran Conference*, p.164 (in Russian).



to arrive in the liberated areas right away so as to establish its control over the nation. Eden believed that at Tehran it was necessary to secure its right to return to Poland.<sup>1</sup> But the governments of Britain and the U.S. realised that it was impossible because of the rupture of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government in exile. Therefore, at that Conference Churchill and Roosevelt brought up the question of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government in exile being re-established.

In that connection, the Soviet representatives pointed out at the Conference that the Polish Government in exile held an extremely hostile position with regard to the U.S.S.R. and that its agents in Poland were not fighting against the German invaders, and were even cooperating with them in the extermination of the Polish guerilla fighters. Moreover, that government laid territorial claims to the U.S.S.R., keeping up the policy aimed at grabbing Soviet lands which had been pursued by imperialist Poland before the war. Naturally, it was inconceivable in such conditions to have diplomatic relations restored. Churchill and Roosevelt actually had to admit this. They even tried to make the Polish Government in exile see reason to some extent. Churchill pointed out to its members that Poland's liberation was impossible without the U.S.S.R. Yet the position of the Polish reactionary government in exile remained unchanged.

The post-war frontiers of Poland figured prominently in the discussions. On the opening day of the Conference, the leader of the Soviet delegation suggested in an unofficial conversation with the heads of the delegations of the U.S. and Britain that Poland's territory should extend to the Oder in the West. The Soviet Union was prepared to help the Poles achieve it.<sup>2</sup>

As for Poland's Eastern frontiers, the Soviet representatives declared that the Ukrainian lands should form part of the Ukraine and the Byelorussian lands should form part of Byelorussia.<sup>3</sup> The Heads of Government of Britain and the U.S. agreed, as before, to the Soviet position on the issue. Churchill admitted that it was necessary to put these proposals into effect, notably, in order to ensure the security

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Prem. 3/136/3, Eden's Note of November 27, 1943, to Churchill.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran. 1943*, pp. 510, 512.

<sup>3</sup> *The Tehran Conference*, p. 165 (in Russian).

of the Western borders of the Soviet Union. He submitted a proposal providing that "the heartland of the Polish State and people must be situated between the so-called Curzon Line and the line of the Oder".<sup>1</sup> That question was agreed in principle.

In the course of the discussions about the separation from Germany of East Prussia, which had more than once served as the springboard for German attacks on East European countries, Stalin raised the question of Königsberg and the corresponding part of the territory of East Prussia being turned over to the Soviet Union. He said the U.S.S.R. was in need of warm-water ports in the Baltic. Besides, that was Slav territory historically, from time immemorial.<sup>2</sup>

Churchill pointed out in his memoirs that he had always thought it was a wrong thing that such a "mighty land mass" as the U.S.S.R. should be denied during the winter months an effective access to the broad waters.<sup>3</sup> He said as much at the Conference as well.<sup>4</sup>

In his message to Stalin shortly after the Conference, Churchill said that in the British Government's opinion the transfer of Königsberg to the Soviet Union was a just and right claim. He pointed out that he considered the war against German aggression to be a thirty years' war which had begun in 1914. "The soil of this part of East Prussia was dyed with Russian blood expended freely in the common cause. Here the Russian armies advancing in August 1914 and winning the battle of Gumbinnen and other actions had with their forward thrusts and with much injury to their mobilisation forced the Germans to recall two army corps from the advance on Paris which withdrawal was an essential part in the victory of the Marne." Therefore, Churchill stated, "the Russians had a historic and well-founded claim to this German territory".<sup>5</sup>

#### INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ORGANISATION. THE COLONIAL QUESTION

The U.S. President set out his views at the Conference regarding the creation of an international security organisa-

<sup>1</sup> *The Tehran Conference*, p.167 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>3</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. 5, p.336.

<sup>4</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran. 1943*, p.566.

<sup>5</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. 1, p. 284.

tion. His earlier proposals, already quoted, were somewhat amended. Roosevelt was now suggesting that the organisation should consist of three units: an assembly comprising all the members of the organisation, which was to make recommendations only; an executive committee which apart from the United States of America, the Soviet Union, Britain and China, should include two European countries, one South American country, one Middle Eastern country and one Asian country and one of the British dominions, and should concern itself with all economic and other non-military problems; a committee of the four Allied Great Powers (the U.S.S.R., the U.S., Britain and China), which would see to the maintenance of peace so as to preclude any further aggression by Germany or Japan.<sup>1</sup>

As said, Roosevelt meant that, with a pro-U.S. China in the above-mentioned committees, he would strengthen the position of the United States in the new international organisation. Referring to the way Roosevelt had brought up the matter at the Tehran Conference, American historian R. Dallek pointed out that he was not guided by "sentimental concern" for China. "His central goal was to safeguard America's wartime and post-war interests in the Pacific and around the world... From a longer perspective, he looked forward to having China's political support against other Pacific Powers, namely, Britain, Russia, and ultimately a resurgent Japan."<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet delegation accepted in principle the creation of an international security organisation. However, that question was not considered in detail at the Conference, and no decision was taken on it.

During the first round of his discussions with Stalin, Roosevelt touched on the colonial issue. He wanted a system of international trusteeship for the colonies of other countries in the hope of gaining free access to them, and considered that the military power and economic strength of the United States would bring most of those colonies under American domination. Besides, as R. Dallek admits, Roosevelt hoped that the system of trusteeship would allow the United States "to establish long-term naval and air bases

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<sup>1</sup> *The Tehran Conference*, pp.114-116 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> R. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, pp.428, 429.

at strategic points in the Pacific and elsewhere... A system of collective rule for the benefit of emerging nations would effectively de-emphasize American military control."<sup>1</sup>

### FINLAND'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WAR

One more point brought up in the course of the negotiations was the possibility of Finland withdrawing from the war. As the head of the Soviet Government informed his negotiating partners, the Finns had communicated through the Swedes that they would like to talk the matter over with the Russians and were ready to send their representatives to Moscow. As far as the terms for Finland's withdrawal from the war were concerned, it followed from the Finnish proposals that they were not prepared to see the Soviet-Finnish border re-established as it existed when Finland attacked the U.S.S.R. in June 1941, but wanted to get a slice of Soviet territory. Naturally, the Soviet Union was not prepared to surrender any bit of its territory as a price for Finland's withdrawal from the war. The minutes of the Conference with regard to this issue record:

"*Stalin*. My opinion is that this reply of the Finns indicates that they are not anxious to conduct serious negotiations with the Soviet Government.

"*Churchill*. That is a very interesting communication.

"*Roosevelt*. Yes, that is a most interesting statement, but also unsatisfactory.

"*Stalin*. The point is that some elements in the Finnish ruling groups still have hopes of a German victory.

"*Roosevelt*. I agree with that.

"*Churchill*. My sympathies had been with the Finns... But everybody in Britain turned against the Finns when Finland joined Germany in attacking the Soviet Union. That was, in my view, an ignominious act by Finland.

"*Stalin*. At present, there are 21 divisions on the Soviet front, and while they were expressing their desire to negotiate, they had recently increased their divisions to that number from 16.

"*Molotov*. I must say that for 27 months the Finns have had Leningrad, the second capital of the Soviet Union, under artillery fire...

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<sup>1</sup> R. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, p.429.

"Roosevelt. I think the present Finnish Government is pro-German."<sup>1</sup>

### THREE-POWER DECLARATION ON IRAN

The Conference adopted a Declaration of the Three Powers Regarding Iran. It pointed out the significance of the assistance which Iran had given in the prosecution of the war against the common enemy. The heads of the Three Powers expressed their intention to make economic assistance available to Iran. The Declaration stated that the Governments of the Three Powers were at one "in their desire for the maintenance of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran".<sup>2</sup>

On November 29, Winston Churchill handed Stalin a sword of honour presented by the King of Great Britain "To the steel-hearted citizens of Stalingrad".<sup>3</sup>

The Conference ended on December 1.

The Soviet delegation had done everything possible at the Conference to make it a success. Reporting, on his return to London, to a British War Cabinet meeting about the results of the Conference, Eden admitted that throughout those difficult discussions Stalin "had been most cooperative".<sup>4</sup>

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The Tehran meeting was of great significance for the course and the outcome of the Second World War. For the first time since their coalition was formed, the U.S.S.R., Britain and the U.S. concerted their plans for the prosecution of the war against the common enemy, that is the plans for coalition warfare. That created more favourable conditions for the decisive blow to be dealt at the bloc of the fascist aggressors. The fixing of the date for the opening of the Second Front in Europe meant that from the spring of 1944 there would have to be fundamental changes in the conduct of the war against Hitler Germany by Britain and

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<sup>1</sup> *The Tehran Conference*, pp.158-160 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.176.

<sup>3</sup> The sword was subsequently turned over to the State Defence Museum in the city of Volgograd where it has since been on display.

<sup>4</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/40.

the U.S., and that they would have to pass over to more active operations and make a greater contribution towards defeating the forces of the common enemy. Yet it was the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces that were to play the decisive part in crushing the Reich.

Yet another thing of essential importance was the exchange of views between the Heads of Government of the Three Powers on the most important issues of post-war peace settlement. They succeeded in concerting their positions on certain most essential issues. The Three-Power Declaration proclaimed that they would "work together in war and in the peace that will follow".<sup>1</sup> All that attested to the strength of the alliance of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Great Britain in the war, and to the frustration of the hopes of the fascist bloc leaders to see it break up. Although the coalition consisted of Powers having different social systems, the centripetal forces prevailed over the centrifugal forces. Furthermore, the three of them had a common goal of fundamental importance that brought them together and kept them together.

By its military and political decisions, the Tehran Conference served to hasten the United Nations victory in the war and bring peace nearer.

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran*, p.640.

## Chapter V

### 1944: LIBERATING MISSION

The tide in the war had turned. Almost half the Nazi-occupied territory of the U.S.S.R. had been liberated. In 1944, however, the Soviet forces still had to resolve problems of tremendous importance. They had yet to drive the enemy out altogether, liberate or share in liberating other Nazi-occupied countries, bring off the defeat of the aggressors and carry the war to full victory.

The Soviet Union was still bearing, single-handed, the brunt of the war against the German Reich and its European allies—Finland, Romania and Hungary. Its armies were a potent force. Their strength as of January 1, 1944, was 8,562,000 less the hinterland military districts. There were 6,354,000 men in the field, and close on 488,000 in reserve under the Supreme Command. The Soviet Army had over 95,000 guns and mortars, more than five thousand tanks and assault guns, and upwards of ten thousand combat aircraft at its disposal on the Soviet-German Front. The Soviet forces were being supplied with an unending flood of military hardware of all basic types. In 1944, the Soviet munitions industries put out over 122,400 guns, 29,000 tanks and self-propelled guns, and upwards of 33,200 combat aircraft.<sup>1</sup>

But the enemy still had a great deal of strength too. By the end of 1943, the Wehrmacht had 10,169,000 men, with 6,682,000 in the field. Two-thirds of the ground forces in action were concentrated on the Soviet-German front. The German forces confronting the Soviet armies had upwards

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Moscow, 1977, Vol. 8, pp. 16, 45; Vol. 12, p. 168 (in Russian). Besides, in 1944, the Soviet Union received a certain amount of military hardware under the Lend-Lease Act from the U.S. and Britain, including 2,613 tanks and 5,749 aircraft (*History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1962, p. 585—in Russian).

of 54,000 guns and mortars, more than five thousand tanks and assault guns and over 3,000 combat aircraft. In spite of the British and American air-raids, Germany further expanded her war production in 1944. Output of guns was 148,200 compared with 73,700 in 1943, that of tanks and assault guns went up from 10,700 to 18,300 and of combat aircraft from 19,300 to 34,100.<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Government was confident that Nazi Germany and her allies would be beaten. But it knew just as well that there would still have to be heavy fighting since the enemy would resist with the fury of the doomed. An Order of the Day of February 23, 1944, by Stalin, Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Armed Forces, said: "Germany is fighting with her major forces on one front—against the U.S.S.R. Nevertheless, far from being able to win out, she has found herself pushed to the brink of disaster. The Soviet Union, fighting all alone, has not only held out in the face of the onslaught of the German war machine, but has inflicted crushing defeats on the Nazi forces, and the position of Hitler Germany will be even more hopeless when the major forces of our Allies go into action, and a powerful and mounting offensive by the armies of all the Allied nations against Hitler Germany gets under way."<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet forces, which launched another large-scale offensive late in December 1943, were pressing ahead fast. Following the winter and spring offensive, the Soviet armies liberated the Ukrainian lands west of the Dnieper and the Crimea.

Germany's strategic situation worsened seriously when the U.S. and British forces finally crossed the Channel and landed in Northern France on June 6, 1944. From then on, the Reich had to wage a war on two fronts.

Yet for all that, the Soviet-German front remained the major front of the Second World War. The mammoth Byelorussian operation, which began in June, brought the Soviet armies up to 550-600 km west. The Soviet forces liberated the whole of Byelorussia as well as the eastern regions of Poland up to the Vistula. That was followed by a series of large-scale operations on other sectors of the Front. In consequence, the Soviet Western border had been restored

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 7, p. 84; Vol. 8, pp.20, 45; Vol. 12, p.200 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 2, p.27 (in Russian).



all along its line by the year's end. The Soviet forces' liberating mission beyond the national frontiers had become one of great magnitude.

The natural result of the sweeping Soviet victories over the aggressor troops was to further enhance greatly the international prestige of the Soviet Union. Its say on international problems became extremely important, indeed impossible to disregard.

A major task of Soviet diplomacy was to keep strengthening the wartime Alliance of the U.S.S.R., the U.S., and Great Britain. The American and British Governments, finding it impossible to vanquish Germany and Japan without Soviet participation, also showed interest in maintaining that Alliance. The Nazi chiefs, on the contrary, linked all their hopes to escape defeat with a possible break-up of the Three-Power coalition.

There was a certain change in the set of international problems which were central to the diplomatic effort of the anti-Hitler coalition countries in 1944. It was knocking Nazi Germany's satellites out of the war as soon as possible that now figured as a top priority. A "Declaration by the American, British and Soviet Governments Regarding the Four Axis Satellites"—Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Finland—was published on May 13, 1944. It said that "these nations still have it within their power, by withdrawing from the war and ceasing their collaboration with Germany and by resisting the forces of Nazism by every possible means, to shorten the European struggle, diminish their own ultimate sacrifices. ...The longer they continue at war in collaboration with Germany, the more disastrous will be the consequences to them... These nations must therefore decide now whether they intend to persist in their present hopeless and calamitous policy of opposing the inevitable Allied victory, while there is yet time for them to contribute to that victory."<sup>1</sup>

#### ARMISTICE WITH FINLAND SIGNED

The Finnish ruling elements were among the Hitler aggressors' most loyal allies. Ever since the outbreak of the war, they had openly and persistently counted on a Third Reich

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 2, pp. 132-133 (in Russian).

victory and hoped, by joining them, to get a slice of Soviet land. Their zeal was so great that they seemed to attach no importance to the setbacks which the German forces sustained on the approaches to Moscow at the end of 1941 and at Stalingrad a year later, and even to the subsequent retreat of the German forces almost all over the Soviet-German front. The German forces still held their positions outside Leningrad, and that fuelled the hopes of the Finnish reactionaries that an outcome favourable for Finland was not yet altogether ruled out.

It was the defeat of Army Group North by the Soviet forces in January and February 1944 that changed things radically. It was becoming evident that the predatory anti-Soviet designs of Finland's ruling elements were doomed to frustration.

On February 16, a Finnish Government representative unofficially asked the Soviet envoy in Sweden, A. M. Kollontai, to find out the terms for Finland's withdrawal from the war.<sup>1</sup> These terms were communicated to him three days later.<sup>2</sup>

Finland had attacked the Soviet Union in conjunction with Germany and Finnish troops had seized quite a bit of Soviet soil. They had joined the German forces in encircling, besieging and incessantly shelling Leningrad. All that caused the Soviet people to suffer heavy casualties and sustain incalculable material damage. And yet the Soviet Government, determined to bring the war with Finland to an end as soon as possible, laid down what were extremely moderate armistice terms. While in respect of Germany the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Britain had agreed to accept nothing short of unconditional surrender, the Soviet offer to Finland contained no similar demand. Nor did the U.S.S.R. contemplate an armed occupation of the territory of Finland.

The *Times* in an editorial, described the Soviet terms of armistice, as "moderate". At the same time, it stated that the Finnish leaders "still seek to base the national policy on the expectation of German military victory".<sup>3</sup> The *Daily Herald* found the Soviet proposal to be "not only moderate but generous".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union.... Documents*, Vol. 2, p.89 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, March 2, 1944.

<sup>4</sup> *The Daily Herald*, March 4, 1944.

The U.S. Government backed up the Soviet peace initiative. In a statement transmitted to the Finnish Government on March 16, Roosevelt expressed the hope that Finland would now take the opportunity to dissociate itself from Germany.<sup>1</sup> Finland's reactionary ruling elements, who had most closely linked the nation's lot with the Reich and did not wish to give up the plans they had harboured for years to capture Soviet lands and create a "Greater Finland", chose, nevertheless, not to avail themselves of that opportunity to break with its policy of aggression. On April 19, the Finnish Government rejected the Soviet terms of armistice as a basis for negotiations.<sup>2</sup>

Ribbentrop arrived in Helsinki to reinforce the German-Finnish military alliance. At his urging, President Risto Ryti of Finland signed a statement on June 26, 1944, officially declaring that his government "will not make peace with the Soviet Union otherwise than by agreement with the German Reich."<sup>3</sup>

However, it was even before, on June 10, that the Soviet armies launched a major offensive on the Soviet-Finnish front. The Finnish forces were driven out from Soviet territory. Leningrad Region was cleared of the invaders. The territory of the Karelo-Finnish Republic, together with its capital, the city of Petrozavodsk, was freed from the enemy. So were the Murmansk Railway and the White Sea-Baltic Canal all along their entire length. That meant finally frustrating the land-grabbing plans of the Finnish ruling elements. They had little to hope for in the face of the sweeping Soviet offensive, the retreat of the German units and the opening of the Second Front in Europe by British and American forces.

Having realised that they had no chance of winning the war, the Government of Finland approached the Soviet Government on August 25 to suggest a visit to Moscow by a Finnish Government delegation to conclude an armistice or peace.<sup>4</sup> That took place on the very same day when Romania, too, accepted the Soviet terms of armistice.

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. 1944*, Vol. 3, p.575.

<sup>2</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 2, pp.113-114 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> C. Leonard Lundin, *Finland in the Second World War*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1957, p.216.

<sup>4</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 2, p.177 (in Russian).

Accepting the Finnish offer, the Soviet Government demanded that Finland should first break off relations with Germany.<sup>1</sup> Late at night on September 3, the Finnish Government made the appropriate announcement. That brought the hostilities on the Soviet-Finnish front to a halt.

The armistice negotiations with Finland, involving representatives of the Soviet, British and Finnish Governments, began in Moscow on September 14. They ended five days later in the signing of an armistice agreement.

The agreement stated that hostilities between the U.S.S.R. and Finland were terminated. The Finnish Government undertook to disarm the German units which remained in Finland after September 15. The Soviet-Finnish Treaty of March 12, 1940, re-entered into force, with some amendments. Finland returned Petsamo Region (Pechenga), undertaking to recompense the Soviet Union for the damage she had caused by her military operations and occupation of Soviet territory, estimated at 300 million dollars, to be repaid with commodity deliveries in the space of six years. All of Finland's pro-Hitler political, military, paramilitary, and other organisations engaged in hostile propaganda against the United Nations and, notably, the Soviet Union, were disbanded. An Allied Control Commission was set up to supervise the fulfilment of the terms of armistice.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the tremendous casualties and damage caused by Finland to the Soviet Union by her participation in the war on the German side, the Soviet Government did not guide itself by a feeling of revenge when concluding the armistice. It was looking ahead, eager to lay the ground for normal relations between the two countries.

#### ROMANIA DEFEATED. ARMISTICE AGREEMENT

Romania had been in a state of war both with the U.S.S.R. and with Britain and the U.S. but she had actually only fought against the Soviet Union. In its Note of January 16, 1944 to the Government of the U.S.S.R. the British Government said that it admitted without reserve that since the main thrust of Romania's war effort was directed against the Soviet forces and they would, most probably, be the first

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union ... Documents*, Vol. 2, pp. 177-178 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 215-220.

of the Allied forces to reach Romania, it was, above all, up to the Soviet Government to decide what the terms of the armistice with the Romanians were to be.

Soviet troops reached the Soviet-Romanian border late in March 1944. The Soviet Government's terms of armistice, agreed with the Governments of Great Britain and the United States, were communicated to the Romanian Government on April 12. But they were rejected by the Antonescu Government still loyal to the Nazis.

The Jassy-Kishinev Operation by the Soviet forces began on August 20. They were opposed by 47 enemy divisions, including 22 Romanian divisions (altogether 900,000 men, including 335,000 Romanian men and officers). The encirclement of the enemy's main forces had been completed by August 23 and the encircled group was crushed a few days later. Almost all the Romanian divisions that had been on the front-lines were smashed up or surrendered. Soviet forces were advancing fast deep into Romania.

Following the defeat of the German and Romanian troops in the Jassy-Kishinev Operation, the royalist-fascist regime in Romania lost its base of support and faced inevitable collapse. As early as August 10, the German envoy in Romania, von Killinger, cabled to Ribbentrop: "Everything is quiet in Romania. King Mihaj is the best guarantor of the strength of Romania's alliance with Germany."<sup>1</sup> However, the King and the Romanian bourgeoisie had now decided that the immediate withdrawal from the war was their only hope for survival. When Antonescu, reporting to King Mihaj on August 23, refused to terminate military operations, he was arrested by the palace guard. Mihaj decided to repeat the "Italian option" in which the King had arrested Mussolini at the crucial moment, thus keeping his power and reactionary regime intact.

The King immediately announced the formation of a new government under General Sanatescu, Chief of the King's War Cabinet, the cessation of military operations against the United Nations and the acceptance by Romania of the armistice terms. That meant Romania's surrender and her withdrawal from the war as a party to the bloc of fascist aggressors.

In the meantime, preparations were drawing to a close in

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<sup>1</sup> Hans Friessner, *Verratene Schlachten. Die Tragödie der deutschen Wehrmacht in Rumänien und Ungarn*, Holsten-Verlag, Hamburg, 1956, p. 58.

Romania for an anti-fascist armed uprising. The Military Committee, preparing the uprising, at its meeting on August 19 to 22, attended also by Communists, fixed the date of the armed uprising for August 26.<sup>1</sup> But the encirclement of the main German-Romanian forces in the course of the Jassy-Kishinev Operation created favourable conditions for the date to be advanced, and the uprising began as soon as Antonescu was arrested by the King. The Communist Party of Romania, emerging from the underground, headed the masses in that struggle. The Soviet forces entered the Romanian capital late in August. From the standpoint of international law, the Soviet forces were in a hostile country which had surrendered. The Soviet Union had the full right to demand that the Romanian troops lay down arms at once. Romanian men and officers could have been made prisoners of war. But the Soviet Government decided to offer Romania a chance by sharing in the hostilities, to redeem to a certain extent at least the wrong she had done through collaboration with Nazi Germany in attacking the U.S.S.R. and through atrocities which Romanian troops had committed while on Soviet territory.

An armistice agreement with Romania was signed in Moscow on September 12. Under it, the Romanian Government acknowledged of Romania's defeat in the war against the U.S.S.R., the U.S., Great Britain and the other United Nations. Romania committed herself to enter into the war against Germany and Hungary. Romania had to make up (partly) for the damage caused to the Soviet Union and also restitute to the U.S.S.R. the values and materials plundered (factory and plant equipment, locomotives, railway cars, tractors, motor vehicles, historical monuments, museum values and other property). All pro-Hitler (fascist-type) organisations were to be disbanded immediately. An Allied Control Commission for Romania was set up under the general direction of the Soviet High Command to supervise compliance with the armistice terms.<sup>2</sup>

The defeat of royalist-fascist Romania, one of Nazi Germany's allies in her aggression against the U.S.S.R., and her withdrawal from the war were of essential military and political significance for the Soviet Union. The Soviet forces obtained further strategic vantage-ground for the defeat of

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 9, p.110 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 2, pp.205-210 (in Russian).

German troops throughout South-Eastern Europe. The total collapse of the bloc of fascist aggressors in Europe was imminent.

The Soviet force in Romania went on with their liberating mission. By October 25, 1944, the whole of her territory had been cleared of German troops. Sixty-nine thousand Soviet men and officers died while fighting on Romanian territory.<sup>1</sup>

### **SOVIET ACTION TO GET BULGARIA OUT OF THE WAR**

The royalist-fascist rulers of Bulgaria kept faithfully serving the Nazis. Having declared war on the U.S. and Britain in December 1941, Bulgaria found herself on the side of the fascist Powers. Considering the Bulgarian people's feeling of friendship for the Russians, the Bulgarian Government had not declared war on the U.S.S.R. In actual fact, however, Bulgaria was aiding Hitler Germany, directly and indirectly, in the war against the Soviet Union.

That aid increased in the spring of 1944 after the German forces had to retreat from the Southern Ukraine. Being in need of ports to base their ships in and of airfields for their aircraft which were involved in combat operations against the U.S.S.R., the Nazis began, along with Romanian, to use Bulgarian ports and airfields. The Bulgarian Government offered the Nazis a wide opportunity to use virtually their entire territory for action against the Soviet Union. So Bulgaria was, as a matter of fact, being drawn into the war against the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Government was anxious to prevent Bulgaria from being involved in the war against the U.S.S.R. on the side of the Reich. On April 17, 1944, it addressed a Note to the Government of Bulgaria. After setting out the said facts, the Soviet Government emphasised: "Such a situation is incompatible with normal relations between the U.S.S.R. and Bulgaria and cannot be tolerated any longer." The Soviet Union imperatively demanded that the Bulgarian Government immediately stop Germany from using Bulgarian territory, and Bulgarian ports against the U.S.S.R.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Liberating Mission of the Soviet Armed Forces in World War II*, Moscow, 1971, p. 180 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 2, pp.185-186 (in Russian).

On May 18, the Soviet Government warned Bulgaria that unless she changed her stance, the U.S.S.R. would have to treat her as a State which was "helping and intended to go on helping Nazi Germany in the war against the Soviet Union".<sup>1</sup>

By persisting in their aid to the Reich in the war against the U.S.S.R., Bulgaria's governing quarters were heading for a break with the Soviet Union.

Since during the Soviet armies' action on the territory of Romania, the German forces began to use the territory of Bulgaria even more widely, on August 30 the Soviet Government told the Government of Bulgaria that it regarded that as "direct assistance to the Germans in the war against the Soviet Union".<sup>2</sup> But the Bulgarian Government failed to draw the necessary conclusions from that statement.

It was under those circumstances that the Soviet Government transmitted a Note to the Government of Bulgaria on September 5, stating that for over three years Bulgaria had been helping Germany in the war against the Soviet Union and was still aiding her. "The Soviet Government cannot see this policy of Bulgaria as anything short of the actual prosecution of the war together with the German camp against the Soviet Union," the Note said. "Therefore, the Soviet Government does not consider it possible to maintain relations with Bulgaria any longer, is breaking off all relations with Bulgaria and declares that not only is Bulgaria in a state of war with the U.S.S.R., since she has already been in a state of war with the U.S.S.R., but the U.S.S.R., too, will from now on be in a state of war with Bulgaria."<sup>3</sup> In the morning of September 8, 1944, Soviet troops crossed the Bulgarian border. An address of the Soviet Command to the Bulgarian people stressed that just like Russian troops had liberated Bulgaria from foreign oppression in 1877, so now, in 1944, the sister Soviet Army, having smashed up the Germans, had come to the aid of the Bulgarian people. It entered Bulgaria as an army of liberation to free her from the German yoke.<sup>4</sup>

The Bulgarian people gave a jubilant welcome to the Soviet troops, meeting them as liberators. Not a single shot was

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet-Bulgarian Relations and Links. Documents and Records.* Vol. 1, Moscow, 1976, pp. 594-595 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.600.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.603.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.608.



fired by either side. Shortly afterwards, all Bulgarian territory was cleared of German troops.

A national uprising, led by the Bulgarian Workers' Party, began in Bulgaria at 2 in the night of September 8-9. The royalist-fascist regime was overthrown. A Fatherland Front Government under Kimon Georgiev was formed. The new Bulgarian Government immediately appealed to the U.S.S.R. and the other Allied Powers, asking for an armistice. It declared that it would fight against Germany.

Armistice negotiations began between representatives of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the U.S., on the one hand, and those of Bulgaria, on the other, in Moscow on October 26. At the opening session, the head of the Bulgarian delegation declared that the Fatherland Front Government "realises the mistake made by the former régime which pursued an anti-popular policy on behalf of Bulgaria and committed a major offence". But Bulgaria "has broken the chain of that sinister and criminal fascist dictatorship and succeeded in establishing genuinely popular rule as represented by the Government of the Fatherland Front". Without waiting for the armistice to be signed, it began enforcing its terms, bringing former Bulgarian rulers to justice, reversing the nation's home and foreign policies, breaking with Germany and going to war against her.<sup>1</sup>

The armistice agreement with Bulgaria was signed in Moscow on October 28, 1944. Its basic terms coincided with those of the Armistice Agreement with Romania.

### FASCIST HUNGARY DEFEATED

Fascist Hungary remained attached to the war chariot in harness with Hitler Germany longer than any other of her European allies and satellites. But with the Soviet forces approaching the borders of Hungary in September 1944, the Hungarian rulers were increasingly inclined to surrender.

Late in September, the British Government declared that before entering into negotiations with the Hungarian Government about armistice, it was necessary to call on it to fulfill some preliminary conditions. In line with that initiative, Molotov proposed presenting the Hungarian Govern-

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet-Bulgarian Relations and Links*, Vol. 2, pp.35-36 (in Russian).

ment with the following preliminary conditions: Hungary must withdraw all her troops from Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania in ten days within the Hungarian frontiers as December 31, 1937; Hungary must break all relations with Germany and declare war on her immediately. In that case, the Soviet Government was willing to help Hungary with its troops. Molotov suggested that negotiations of the representatives of the Three Powers with a view to concerting armistice terms with Hungary as well as negotiations with Hungarian representatives should be conducted in Moscow.<sup>1</sup> The Governments of the U.S. and Great Britain agreed to the Soviet proposals.

A major Soviet offensive began in Hungary on October 6. The preliminary conditions were communicated to the Hungarian Government two days later. It announced acceptance, but never complied with them.

On October 15 and 16, the Germans toppled the then Hungarian Government. Political power passed into the hands of an avowed Nazi hireling Szalasi. Hungary fought on together with Nazi Germany. Heavy fighting continued.

In the meantime, a Provisional National Assembly opened at Debreczen, on liberated Hungarian territory, on December 21, which led to central authorities of a nascent people's democracy being formed. A provisional coalition government, including three Communists, was set up. On December 24, it asked the Government of the U.S.S.R. for an armistice.<sup>2</sup> The U.S.S.R. informed the U.S. and Great Britain about its positive response.<sup>3</sup> On December 28, the Provisional Government declared war upon Germany.

Washington and London expressed their consent to an armistice with the Provisional Government of Hungary. On January 18, 1945, representatives of the Three Powers communicated the armistice terms to a delegation of the Hungarian Provisional Government.

The armistice agreement with Hungary was signed in Moscow on January 20. In substance, it was similar to the one concluded with Romania.

Fighting went on in Hungary for several more months, and ended early in April as the Soviet armies liberated all of it from the German troops.

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. 1944*, Vol. 3, pp.895-897.

<sup>2</sup> *Soviet-Hungarian Relations. 1945-1948, Documents and Records*, Moscow, 1969, p.26 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. 1944*, Vol. 3, p.937.

## TREATMENT OF GERMANY CONSIDERED

The Governments of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Britain continued to discuss their policies on Germany. Discussions went on, above all, within the framework of the European Advisory Commission (EAC), created in London by decision of the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Three Powers. The Commission began to function on January 14, 1944. It consisted of the Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain F. T. Gusev, the U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain John Winant, and a representative of the British Foreign Office William Strang.

The opening EAC session resolved to begin by framing the surrender terms for Germany. The document on Germany's unconditional surrender was agreed upon on July 25. It contained provisions regarding Germany's complete defeat, cessation of hostilities by Germany, disarmament of the German forces, and establishment of supreme Allied authority. The Allied governments had "full freedom to lay down such additional requirements subsequently as might prove necessary".<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, the EAC began to consider the zones of occupation in Germany. A British proposal, submitted on January 15, called for Germany to be divided into three zones. The Eastern zone was to be under Soviet control. It covered 40 per cent of the territory and comprised 36 per cent of the population of Germany. That territory contained 33 per cent of the country's industrial capacities. But much of that territory was to be turned over to Poland. Even an official of the American delegation to the EAC, Philip Mosely admitted subsequently that, considering its contribution to the war effort and to victory and war-inflicted sufferings, "the Soviet Union might have claimed a larger share".<sup>2</sup> But the Soviet Government agreed to the British proposal. Mosely interpreted that as an indication of the moderate demands of the U.S.S.R. and its aspiration for Three-Power agreement.

Serious differences arose, however, between the U.S. and Great Britain since both Powers wanted to occupy North-

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union. 1941-1945*, Vol. 4, p.662 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Philip E. Mosely, *The Kremlin and World Politics, Studies in Soviet Policy and Action*, Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, New York, 1960, p.169.

Western Germany, rather than her land-locked South-Western zone.

In March, the U.S. Chiefs of Staff instructed Ambassador John Winant to demand a considerable enlargement of the American zone. According to the American proposal, it was to comprise 46 per cent of German territory and over half the population of Germany. The proposed Soviet zone was reduced to 22 per cent of German territory. The American delegation did not even venture to bring that proposal before the EAC. On May 1, Roosevelt gave his consent to the British-proposed size of the Soviet zone.<sup>1</sup>

On September 12, 1944, representatives of the Three Powers in the EAC signed a protocol on the zones of occupation in Germany and the administration of Greater Berlin. Yet another protocol whereby Britain received the North-Western zone and the U.S., the South-Western zone of occupation was signed on November 14.

The EAC also considered the constitution of control machinery for Germany, that is, the administration of Germany upon her surrender. The decisions taken were based on the Soviet draft of August 25. These called for setting up a Control Council to ensure the coordination of action in the zones and common decision-making for Germany on the principal military, political, economic and other questions. An appropriate agreement was likewise signed on November 14.

The European Advisory Commission had accomplished a certain amount of work to concert the positions of the Three Powers in respect of Germany. The Soviet Government did much to bring about positive results as it earnestly sought cooperation with the U.S. and Great Britain.

It was after the opening of the Second Front in Europe that the United States began to pay special attention to the German question. Many American military and political leaders presumed that Germany might surrender, as she had in 1918, once forced back to her own frontiers. Others hoped that the Germans might disassemble the front in the West while fighting on against the Soviet forces in the East.<sup>2</sup>

U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau worked out a circumstantial plan for dealing with Germany. It pro-

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<sup>1</sup> Diane Shaver Clemens, *Yalta*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1970, p.35.

<sup>2</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp.817-818.

vided for her dismemberment and for virtually all German industry being dismantled so as to turn Germany into a purely agrarian country. The essential object of that plan was to eliminate German industry as a rival to American and British monopolies. That plan was approved at the second Quebec Conference of Roosevelt and Churchill held in mid-September 1944.

However, as it became increasingly obvious, following the Soviet Army's success in the latter half of 1944, that the Soviet Union would emerge from the war a very strong, rather than weakened, world Power, London and Washington began to change tack in respect of Germany. Roosevelt, for example, dropped the Morgenthau plan. The U.S. and Britain began to figure out how to use Germany after the war as a counter-balance to the Soviet Union.

### **THE U.S.S.R. AND THE QUESTION OF POLAND'S FUTURE**

As Soviet forces approached the Polish frontiers, thereby bringing nearer the day of Poland's liberation from the Nazi invaders, there was the question of her future to settle. Whereas in earlier days, it was the opening of the Second Front that had caused the greatest complications in relations between the Three Allied Great Powers, now once it had been settled, the Polish problem turned out to be the most acute one.

The Soviet stand on the subject was set out in a Government statement of January 11, 1944, which pointed out that the Soviet Government sought to "establish friendship between the U.S.S.R. and Poland on terms of solid and close good-neighbour relations and mutual respect and, should the Polish people so desire, in the shape of an alliance of mutual assistance..."<sup>1</sup>

The Governments of Britain and the U.S. pretended to agree to that, and, indeed, they could not but agree, all the more so since they were not going to take a hand in liberating Poland themselves. Clandestinely, however, the ruling elements of the Western Powers harboured plans to re-establish Poland as a reactionary force hostile to the Soviet Uni-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 2, p. 60 (in Russian).

on. To that end, they intended to use the London-based Polish Government in exile. Their ambition was to bring that government over to Poland once her liberation by the Soviet forces began.

The Polish Government in exile planned to stage an uprising in Warsaw, when the Soviet forces approached it, with the help of the underground troops it had under its control on the territory of Poland (*Armija Krajowa*) led by General Bor-Komorowski and seize power. Polish reactionaries did not even want Poland to be liberated, if she was to be liberated by Soviet troops.

The Polish Government in exile would have preferred British and American troops, rather than Soviet, to free Poland. It urged Britain and the U.S. to do whatever they could to liberate Poland. Those were unrealistic expectations, however. The delay of the opening of the Second Front in Europe put all prospect of British and American involvement in Poland's liberation out of the question.

The plans which the Polish imperialists were harbouring for a recapture of the Western regions of the Ukraine and Byelorussia, and also the capital of the Lithuanian S.S.R., Vilnius, were just as illusory. Even Churchill found it impossible to support those ambitions of the so-called London Poles. During the talks with Polish ministers on January 20, the British Premier insisted on their recognising the Soviet-Polish frontier along the Curzon Line. He stressed the role of the U.S.S.R. in restoring a strong and independent Poland. At the same time, Churchill promised that Poland's Eastern frontier would be established along the Oder.<sup>1</sup> He could not, however, persuade the members of the Polish Government in exile to accept the Curzon Line.

The deadlock was discussed at a British War Cabinet meeting on January 25, 1944. Churchill pointed out that the question of Poland had to be settled as soon as possible because the status of the London-based Poles would be undermined as Soviet forces advanced. "Nor ought we to ignore the fact," he said, "that only Russian sacrifices and victories held out any prospect of the restoration of a Free Poland." Unless the question was decided in good time, Poland would have a new government established as a result of a national ballot. That would cause the London-

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<sup>1</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. III, p. 161.

based Polish Government to break up and problems to arise between Russia and the Western Powers. Churchill also noted the Soviet Government's desire for cooperation with the U.S. and Great Britain.<sup>1</sup>

A message from Churchill which reached Moscow on February 1, referred to his negotiations with the head of the Polish Government in exile, Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, and set out the British Government's position. Replying to him on February 4, Stalin emphasised that the question of the Soviet-Polish frontier must be completely cleared up. The Polish Government must officially declare acceptance of the Curzon Line.<sup>2</sup>

At its meeting of February 15, the Polish Government in exile finally turned down the proposals communicated by the British Government.

In those circumstances, Churchill changed tack. He began to press hard for the Soviet Government to defer the settlement of the question of the Soviet-Polish frontier until after the war and for it to recognise the Polish Government in exile. He was resorting to gross pressure to achieve that end. That new line of his was endorsed at a British War Cabinet meeting on March 6. It was decided to seek "U.S. pressure on Russia".<sup>3</sup>

On instructions from London, the British Ambassador in Moscow, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr attempted to apply pressure tactics as he conferred with Molotov on March 19. Within two days, Churchill sent Stalin a similar message on the Polish question.<sup>4</sup>

The Soviet Government, naturally, rebuffed these attempts. "I was struck by the fact," Stalin wrote to Churchill on March 23, 1944, "that both your messages and particularly Kerr's statement bristle with threats against the Soviet Union. I should like to call your attention to this circumstance because threats as a method are not only out of place in relations between Allies, but also harmful, for they may lead to opposite results." The message stated that the British Government was on the point of violating the agreement on the Soviet-Polish frontier achieved at Tehran. At the same time, the head of the Soviet Government spoke

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/45.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 196.

<sup>3</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/45.

<sup>4</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 211.

up in favour of continued cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain in other spheres.<sup>1</sup>

In view of the anti-Soviet stand of the Polish Government in exile and Churchill's departure from the position agreed on at Tehran, the talks on the Polish question came to a deadlock.

In the second half of July 1944, Soviet forces, together with Polish units formed on Soviet territory, crossed the Western Bug and entered the territory of Poland.

The Krajowa Rada Narodowa had been established in the underground in Warsaw in the early hours of January 1, 1944. Boleslaw Bierut became its Chairman. A Polish Committee of National Liberation (PCNL), headed by Edward Boleslaw Osóbka-Morawski was set up on July 21. On the following day, the PCNL published a Manifesto to the Polish people which declared that the Krajowa Rada Narodowa was a provisional Parliament and the Polish Committee of National Liberation it had established, its provisional executive authority. The Soviet Government exchanged official representatives with the PCNL which had its seat in liberated Poland (first at Chelm and then in Lublin).

On July 26, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. announced that the Soviet troops had entered Poland determined "to crush the hostile German armies and to help the Polish people in their liberation from the yoke of the German invaders, and in the restoration of an independent, strong and democratic Poland".<sup>2</sup> An agreement on relations between the Soviet Commander-in-Chief and the Polish administration after the Soviet forces entered the territory of Poland was signed in Moscow on the same day. Under the agreement, control of all aspects of civil administration, except the actual war zone, was to be within the competence of the Polish Committee of National Liberation.<sup>3</sup>

An accord on Polish frontiers was signed on the following day. The Soviet-Polish border was drawn principally along the Curzon Line with some departures to Poland's advantage. It provided, besides, for the southern part of East Prus-

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. 1, p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 2, p. 155 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 157-159.



sia, with Danzig and the adjacent region, to be turned over to Poland. The Soviet Government undertook, when the border between Poland and Germany came to be delimited, to abide by the Polish demand for it to pass along the Oder and Neisse rivers with Stettin incorporated in Poland.<sup>1</sup>

At that time, the question of Poland arose again in relations between the Governments of the U.S.S.R. and Britain. Stalin informed Churchill about the creation of the Polish Committee of National Liberation. "As to the Polish Committee," he wrote, "I cannot consider it a Polish Government, but it may be that later on it will constitute the core of a Provisional Polish Government made up of democratic forces."<sup>2</sup>

The British Government, disturbed as it was by the course of events in Poland, decided to take some urgent measures. Churchill literally forced the head of the Polish Government in exile, Mikolajczyk to go to Moscow.<sup>3</sup> Mikolajczyk had been the leader of a peasant party, fairly influential in pre-war Poland, and maintained a more restrained attitude towards the USSR than most of the ministers of his Cabinet. Therefore, it was hoped in London, that he might arrive at a compromise arrangement in Moscow. Now, in the changed circumstances, Churchill no longer thought it possible for relations to be re-established between the Government of the U.S.S.R. and the Polish Government in exile. He now presented the issue in a quite different light. "I believe," he wrote to Stalin, "that the Poles who are friendly to Russia should join with the Poles who are friendly to Britain and the United States..."<sup>4</sup>

Mikolajczyk, who arrived in Moscow on July 29 as a matter of urgency, was received by J. V. Stalin. Afterwards, he conferred with Bierut, Osóbka-Morawski and other representatives of the Krajowa Rada Narodowa and the PCNL. The question at issue in those negotiations was that of setting up a new Polish Government. Mikolajczyk was offered premiership, and his supporters, some of the ministerial offices. However, he declined the offer pleading the need to discuss the matter with members of his Government.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Documents ... on Soviet-Polish Relations*, Vol. 8, pp. 156-157 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 242.

<sup>3</sup> *Roosevelt and Churchill. Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, p. 554.

<sup>4</sup> *Correspondence...* Vol. I, p. 245.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

Mikolajczyk also refused to give his consent to the Soviet-Polish border being established along the Curzon Line.

In the meantime, an uprising broke out in Warsaw on August 1, organised by underground reactionary forces at the behest of the Polish Government in exile. The insurgent strength was not large and, besides, it was made up of badly armed people. The insurgents had just about 3,500 firearms<sup>1</sup>. In those circumstances, that uprising, as Stalin said, was "a reckless and fearful gamble"<sup>2</sup>.

Since the advancing Soviet forces were already not far away from Warsaw, the Polish reactionary forces hoped they would throw the German troops into confusion through the uprising, capture power in Poland's capital and bring in the Government in exile. As he set off for Moscow, Mikolajczyk hoped that the uprising would strengthen his hand in the negotiations. But that was a vain hope.

Soon afterwards, having recovered from the surprise strike, the German troops began to close up around the insurgents. Churchill and Roosevelt asked Stalin to help the insurgents.<sup>3</sup> Replying to those appeals, the head of the Soviet Government wrote: "Sooner or later the truth about the handful of power-seeking criminals who launched the Warsaw adventure will out. Those elements, playing on the credulity of the inhabitants of Warsaw, exposed practically unarmed people to German guns, armour and aircraft."<sup>4</sup>

Since the residents of Warsaw, not knowing of the actual aims of the organisers of the uprising, took an active part in it, the Soviet Government did whatever it could to aid it. That took place in extremely complicated conditions. Soviet troops had advanced 600 km fighting hard during the summer offensive. They sustained heavy losses and were in need of reinforcement and closer logistic support. Nevertheless, the Soviet Command took all the necessary steps to organise an offensive to free Warsaw. However, the enemy shielded the approaches to it from the east with strong armour cover which proved impossible to breach on the march. In spite of the fierce resistance of German troops which counter-attacked more than once, the Soviet Army was pushing forward. On September 14, the Soviet forces in cooperation with the Pol-

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 9, p. 71 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 254.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 248, 251, 254.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

ish troops, succeeded in liberating the right-bank districts of Warsaw from the enemy. Six reinforced Polish battalions crossed to the left bank from September 16 to 20. However, they failed to overcome the resistance of German armoured and infantry units. Sustaining considerable losses, those battalions had to return to the right bank on September 24. The Soviet and Polish units, fighting side by side, had not enough strength for a Vistula crossing on a larger scale at the time.<sup>1</sup> It took a further four months or so to prepare for that operation.

The Soviet forces supported the insurgents with artillery fire as well. Moreover, there had been 4,821 air missions, including 2,435 for dropping cargo and 1,361 for bombing and strafing enemy troops in Warsaw at the insurgents' request. The Warsaw insurgents thus received 156 mortars, 505 anti-tank guns, 1,478 automatic rifles, 1,209 rifles and carbines, 3,300,000 cartridges for firearms, 515 kg of medicines, 130 tonnes of foodstuffs, telephone sets, cable and other military equipment.<sup>2</sup>

However, the Nazis managed to put down the uprising. On October 2, the commander of the Polish reactionary underground forces, Bor-Komorowski surrendered. Warsaw was as good as razed to the ground by the Nazis. About 200,000 civilians died. That was the bitter upshot of that reckless venture of Polish reactionaries.

Yet to try and find a justification for themselves, they immediately began to circulate stories that the insurgents had sustained a defeat through the fault of the Soviet forces who had failed to come to their aid in good time. But the fact is that, as they started the uprising, the Polish reactionaries did not want such help. Their plans were aimed at liberating Warsaw without Soviet military aid. For that reason, the Soviet Command had not been notified either of the preparation made for the uprising or the date fixed for it. Furthermore, as already stated, the Soviet forces did not have enough strength and resources at the time to make a quick breakthrough to Warsaw and cross so important a waterway as the Vistula. Here is just one fact to show how bitter the fighting was in the central sector of the Soviet-German front: the forces of the 1st Byelorussian Front and the 1st Ukrainian Front lost 289,000 men and officers killed

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 9, pp. 71-72 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Documents... on Soviet-Polish Relations*, Vol. 8, p. 255 (in Russian).

or wounded in the space of six weeks—August and the first half of September 1944—but could not break through to Warsaw.<sup>1</sup>

The inconsistency of the above-mentioned contentions of the spokesmen for Polish reaction and Western historians who played up those stories can be seen, moreover, from the fact that it was stated even at a British Cabinet meeting on August 28 that all the evidence went to show that *the Russians were doing their utmost to reach Warsaw*.<sup>2</sup>

The Polish Committee of National Liberation, based in Lublin was conducting intense activity on the liberated territory of Poland. The process of establishing a new people's democratic Poland was underway.

In those circumstances, Churchill "invited himself to Moscow".<sup>3</sup> He decided to try and save the utterly bankrupt capitalist regime in Poland and keep her within the capitalist fold. The British Premier was in a hurry. He first suggested his visit on September 27 and on October 9 he was in Moscow already. On his initiative, Mikolajczyk also arrived in the U.S.S.R. Bierut and Osóbka-Morawski had been invited to come to Moscow as well.

The Head of the Soviet Government emphasised in his conversation with Mikolajczyk on October 13 that if he desired any agreement, he had, first of all, to give his consent to the Soviet-Polish border being established along the Curzon Line. It was likewise impossible to ignore the existence of the Polish Committee of National Liberation.<sup>4</sup> Churchill seconded the Soviet proposal for the Curzon Line, stressing its fairness. He emphatically demanded that Mikolajczyk recognise the Curzon Line and establish friendly contact with the Polish Committee of National Liberation.<sup>5</sup> "You are a callous people," Churchill told Mikolajczyk, meaning him and the members of his Government, "who want to wreck Europe" and are manifesting a "criminal attempt to wreck ... agreement among the Allies" and "to conquer Russia".<sup>6</sup>

Later in the day, Stalin and Churchill conferred with

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the USSR Since Ancient Times*, Vol. 10, Moscow, 1973, pp. 511-512 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/47. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>3</sup> Diane Shaver Clemens, *Yalta*, p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> *Documents... on Soviet-Polish Relations*, Vol. 8, pp. 271-272.

<sup>5</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, p. 205.

<sup>6</sup> Diane Shaver Clemens, *Yalta*, p. 26. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

representatives of the Polish Committee of National Liberation who expressed their consent to reach agreement with Mikolajczyk about the formation of a new Polish Government, with him as Prime Minister. But they considered that representatives of the Polish Committee of National Liberation were to hold most of the seats in that government.<sup>1</sup>

On October 14, Churchill drew up a project for the settlement of the question of the Polish frontiers and the Polish Government. Stalin agreed in principle to these issues being settled on the basis of the British Premier's proposals.<sup>2</sup> The representatives of the PCNL were also ready to come to compromise. But Mikolajczyk continued to object to the Soviet-Polish border passing along the Curzon Line. He said he had to go back to London again to consult his Government. Churchill failed, because of Mikolajczyk's position, to get the Polish question settled during his Moscow visit.

The overwhelming majority of the members of the London-based Polish Government in exile had emphatically declined the agreement which began to emerge during the Moscow talks. On November 24, Mikolajczyk resigned. A new Polish Government, headed by Arciszewski, was formed in London. It consisted of extremely reactionary and most anti-Soviet elements.

On December 31, 1944, the Krajowa Rada Narodowa opened its session which reorganised the Polish Committee of National Liberation into a Provisional Government. On January 5, 1945, it was recognised by the Soviet Government. Both Governments exchanged ambassadors.

## SOVIET-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS

The question of Soviet-Czechoslovak relations was also one of considerable relevance as the hour of Czechoslovakia's liberation drew nearer. But they were developing in an entirely different way.

In 1943, the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia opened negotiations with a view to concluding a treaty of mutual assistance. Both the Soviet Government and the Government of Czechoslovakia attached great importance to such a treaty.

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Diplomacy*, Vol. 4, p. 497 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. III, p. 228.

But Britain opposed it. In June 1943 the British Government thwarted a visit to the U.S.S.R. by Edvard Beneš who intended to sign the treaty with the U.S.S.R. during that visit. Plans began to be worked out in London for a treaty to be concluded between the U.S.S.R., Poland, Czechoslovakia and Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> The British Government hoped to become the all-powerful arbiter within that system and play the main role in resolving the problems of Eastern Europe. The Soviet Government succeeded, however, in having Britain drop her objections to the conclusion of a Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty.

The Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-War Cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia was signed in Moscow on December 12, 1943. The Contracting Parties undertook to render each other military and other assistance in the war against Germany. The Treaty provided for mutual assistance between the USSR and Czechoslovakia also in the event of Germany restarting her acts of aggression. The Governments of the two countries came to agreement about close cooperation in the post-war period in order to ensure their security. They pledged themselves not to conclude any alliances or participate in coalitions directed against the other Contracting Party. The Treaty was concluded for a term of 20 years.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty was a contribution towards strengthening the alliance of nations at war with the German aggressors. It created a sound base for the development and improvement of the cooperation of the two nations and their peoples. At the same time, it was to play an important part in strengthening the peace in Europe in the post-war period. The Czechoslovak Government saw the Treaty as a major factor for restoring a unitary Czechoslovak state after the war, abolishing the Nazi-begotten puppet clerical-fascist Slovakia and also eliminating the consequences of the notorious 1938 Munich deal.

In view of the fact that Soviet forces were approaching the Czechoslovak border an Agreement on Relations Between the Soviet Supreme Commander and the Czechoslovak Administration following the entry of Soviet troops into the territory of Czechoslovakia was signed on May 8, 1944. Under that agreement as soon as any particular

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<sup>1</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. II, pp. 595-598.

<sup>2</sup> *Soviet-Czechoslovak Relations... Documents*, pp. 132-134 (in Russian).

part of the liberated territory of Czechoslovakia ceased to be a zone of hostilities, the Czechoslovak Government "shall take the power of administration of public affairs into its own hands, wholly and entirely".<sup>1</sup> The agreement reposed on strict adherence to, and respect for, Czechoslovakia's independence and sovereignty by the Soviet Union. Upon the initiative of the Soviet side, the agreement was drafted by the Czechoslovak Government.

A large-scale partisan movement under Communist leadership got underway in Slovakia in the summer of 1944. There was a revolutionary situation there. Late in August, the Nazis decided to move German troops into Slovakia which precipitated a popular uprising. It sparked off a national-democratic revolution in Czechoslovakia.

The London-based Czechoslovak Government asked the Soviet Government to help the insurgents.<sup>2</sup> The Soviet Government responded straight away. The first Soviet planes with military equipment landed on an insurgent-held airstrip in the early hours of September 5.

The Carpathian-Dukla operation of the Soviet troops began on September 8. It led to the enemy being driven out of the western regions of the Ukraine, and the Trans-Carpathian Ukraine and part of Eastern Slovakia were liberated.

The Nazis, who had thrown superior forces into action against the insurgents, managed to quell the uprising, but the Soviet aid to the Slovak uprising and the attempted breakthrough to the East Carpathians by the Soviet troops to join the insurgents further cemented the friendship between the peoples of the two countries.

## **THE U.S.S.R. AND NEW YUGOSLAVIA**

Essential changes occurred in Soviet-Yugoslav relations.

The positions of the Communist-led People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia (PLAY) had been greatly strengthened by the end of 1943. It had as many as 300,000 fighting men. Liberated areas comprised about half of Yugoslavia with a population of around five million. The struggle for the nation's liberation from Nazi invaders intertwined with the struggle for social emancipation. In the liberated regions,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 160-162.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 181-182, 190-193.

the mass of the people, led by the Communists, were taking power into their own hands and setting up new government bodies—people's liberation committees.

The Anti-Fascist Assembly of National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AANLY) held its second session on November 29, 1943. It declared itself the supreme law-making body and executive authority of Yugoslavia. A National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia (NCLY), headed by Josip Broz Tito, was set up, vested with the powers of a provisional government. Those decisions implied creating new national people's democratic government bodies in Yugoslavia.

The Soviet Union fully supported the decisions of the second session of the AANLY. The Information Bureau of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. issued a statement on December 14 "On the Events in Yugoslavia" which stated that these events were "regarded by the Government of the U.S.S.R. as positive facts conducive to the continued effective struggle of the peoples of Yugoslavia against Hitler Germany".<sup>1</sup>

A Soviet military mission under Lieutenant-General N. V. Korneyev arrived by air in Yugoslavia on February 23, 1944. A military mission of the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia arrived in Moscow on April 12. Through those missions, the Soviet Government and the NCLY maintained close relations over a wide range of political as well as military issues.

In September 1944, the Soviet forces advanced in Romania and Bulgaria to the borders of Yugoslavia. At the NCLY's request, the Soviet Government agreed to take part in the liberation of Yugoslavia from the German aggressors. On October 20, they, in conjunction with Yugoslav units, freed Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia.

The government authorities of new Yugoslavia moved to Belgrade. That fact alone went far towards strengthening their position.

The British ruling establishment showed considerable concern over the course of events in Yugoslavia and the erosion of the positions of the Government in exile and of Yugoslav reactionary elements in general, and over the prospect of a Communist-led State appearing on the outskirts

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 1, p. 379 (in Russian).



of the Mediterranean. But London realised that the opportunity Britain and the U.S. had to influence the course of events in Yugoslavia was dwindling.

Churchill went all out to safeguard Britain's imperialist interests in the region. Since it was no longer realistic to count on the King and the Government in exile coming back to Yugoslavia, he was casting about for a way to carry through at least some of his plans. The British Premier had met Tito back in August 1944. While in Moscow, in October, he had raised the question of Yugoslavia in his discussions with the head of the Soviet Government. In an effort to bind the U.S.S.R. to a commitment not to confront Britain with "faits accomplis" in matters concerning Soviet-Yugoslav relations, the British Premier offered to pursue a "joint policy" on Yugoslavia, that is, to take no measures, that had not been squared between Britain and the Soviet Union. As he did not want the U.S.S.R. to take such measures, he was willing to stop the British Government taking any measures in respect of Yugoslavia unless they were concerted with the Soviet Government.

The results of the Moscow meetings with Churchill were recorded in an official statement published on October 21, 1944. It said that the Governments of the U.S.S.R. and the United Kingdom had agreed to pursue a "joint policy in Yugoslavia designed to concentrate all energies against the retreating Germans". There was the specific provision that "the right of the Yugoslav people to settle their future state structure for themselves after the war is, of course, recognised as inalienable".<sup>1</sup>

On November 1, 1944, Josip Broz Tito and the head of the Yugoslav Government in exile Ivan Šubašić signed an agreement in Belgrade setting up a unitary Yugoslav Government. The British Government was not exactly pleased with the substance of the Tito-Šubašić agreement, but it supported it nevertheless as it considered that agreement to be the only hope to retain at least some of the positions of the Yugoslav bourgeoisie through Šubašić and his supporters and, in that way, to influence the policy of Yugoslavia to some extent. However, the Yugoslav King Peter II who relied on U.S. support sabotaged the implementation of the agreement which, in consequence, took too long to be enforced.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 2, p. 272 (in Russian).

## THE U.N. CHARTER FRAMED

A conference of representatives of the U.S.S.R., the U.S., and Great Britain met at Dumbarton Oaks, in the outskirts of Washington, on September 21-28, 1944, to consider the establishment of an international organisation for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Before the negotiations started, the three Governments had exchanged memoranda on the procedure for the establishment of the international organisation, its principal agencies, purposes, charter, and other related issues. It was decided to have the discussions based on the Soviet memorandum handed to the Governments of the United States and Great Britain on August 12.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the exchange of opinion which had taken place before the conference went into session, agreement was reached without particular difficulty on most of the issues: the purposes of an international security organisation, the principles of its functioning, its major agencies, and other matters. Some differences arose, however, with regard to certain essential questions, above all, the voting procedure in the Security Council.

The Soviet Government considered it necessary for Council decisions with regard to matters relating to the prevention or suppression of aggression to be taken with the consent of the representatives of all the permanent Member-States of the Council. The Governments of the United States and Great Britain also showed themselves interested in having decisions on all the issues of peace-keeping and security taken only by a unanimous vote of the permanent Member-States. But they insisted on one exception: the country directly affected by the dispute should not take part in the Council vote. Yet this issue was never settled at Dumbarton Oaks.

With the Conference over, its participants published their Proposals for the Establishment of a General International Organisation.

The results of the Conference at Dumbarton Oaks were

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<sup>1</sup> *The Soviet Union at International Conferences During the Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945*, Vol. 3, *Conference of Representatives of the U.S.S.R., the U.S., and Great Britain at Dumbarton Oaks*, Collected Documents (hereinafter—*The Conference at Dumbarton Oaks*), Moscow, 1978, pp. 102-106, 109 (in Russian).

taken as positive in the Soviet Union. In his speech on November 6, 1944, J. V. Stalin remarked, in particular, that some questions had remained unsettled at the conference. "There are some differences, of course," he said. "...They must be present among representatives of different States and different parties... What distinguished this conference is not that it brought out some differences of opinion, but that nine-tenths of the security issues have been resolved at this conference in a spirit of complete unanimity."<sup>1</sup>

#### **TREATY OF ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE U.S.S.R. AND FRANCE, DECEMBER 10, 1944**

In the first half of 1944, the whole of France was still occupied by German forces and controlled by the Vichy-based government which collaborated with the Nazis. French plants and factories continued to turn out large numbers of tanks, guns, aircraft and other military items which passed into German hands.

At the same time, there was a mounting struggle in France against the German invaders and the traitors to the French people who collaborated with them. The Communists were the hard core of the Resistance movement.

A French Committee of National Liberation was operating in French North-West Africa after the landing there of British and American forces and the abolition of the local Vichy authorities. It had its own armed forces at its disposal. De Gaulle wanted these forces to play their full part in the liberation of France expecting that this would, in particular, strengthen both the international position of France and his own position.

However, the relations of the United States and British Governments with de Gaulle had drastically worsened. The Western Allies intended to rule the roost in France as in an occupied country once they had entered her territory. Therefore, they even decided to avoid inviting French forces to join in the opening of the Second Front, that is, in the landing in France.

On June 2, the French Committee of National Liberation was reorganised into a Provisional Government. But in

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 2, pp. 47-48 (in Russian).

view of the position of the United States and Britain, even after the Second Front had been opened and the liberation of French territory began, that Government had to stay on in Algeria. It moved to France only late in August 1944, after the liberation of Paris by the insurgent French patriots. A provisional government of national unity with de Gaulle at its head was formed in France on September 10. It consisted of representatives of several parties, including two Communist ministers.

The new French Government asked the Governments of the U.S.S.R., the U.S., and Britain to recognise it. The U.S. Government was still opposed to its recognition. But in the long run, considering the situation which had arisen, it had to change its mind. On October 23, the Governments of the U.S.S.R., the U.S., and Great Britain simultaneously recognised the Provisional Government of France.

A few days later, the Soviet Government called for a French representative to be included in the European Advisory Commission.<sup>1</sup> On November 11, the Soviet, British and U.S. Governments forwarded an invitation to the Government of France to send its representative to the EAC. France became the fourth member of the European Advisory Commission.

As early as August 12, 1944, the Soviet Government suggested, in its proposals regarding the establishment of an international security organisation, that France should be included as a permanent member of the Security Council of that organisation. The Soviet initiative was reflected in the decisions of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Great Britain.<sup>2</sup>

On his arrival in Paris late in October, Churchill offered de Gaulle to conclude an Anglo-French alliance. In so doing, the British Premier kept insisting on the need to line up with the U.S. That did not suit de Gaulle. He did not want to make France a junior partner of Britain, herself in the position of a junior partner of the U.S., at that, but was anxious for France to be independent. To strengthen her international position, de Gaulle began to consider promoting France's cooperation with the U.S.S.R. He pointed out in his memoirs that the French had on more than one occasion "betrayed" Franco-Russian soli-

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet-French Relations... Documents*, p. 318 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *The Conference at Dumbarton Oaks*, pp. 104, 233 (in Russian).

darity, but that that solidarity "still continued nevertheless to correspond to the natural order of things both from the standpoint of the German threat and of the Anglo-Saxon hegemonic ambitions".<sup>1</sup>

General Charles de Gaulle arrived in Moscow on December 2, 1944, and was accompanied by French Minister for Foreign Affairs Georges Bidault. During his conversation with Stalin, de Gaulle noted that France had experienced a German invasion in 1870-1871, then in 1914-1918 and in 1940. "The French realise," he said, "what Soviet Russia has done for them, and they know that it is Soviet Russia that has played the major role in their liberation." The head of the French Provisional Government pointed out that "the absence of an agreement with Russia has been the cause of all the misfortunes that befell France. France and the U.S.S.R., being as they are Germany's neighbours, are faced by her threat. That was how it had been in the past and how it would be in the future... Whatever was done to weaken Germany would be insufficient." The Rhine must be, he said, France's final barrier against Germany and the German threat. He believed it necessary for the Rhineland to be "separated from Germany and incorporated in France". De Gaulle went on to suggest that France and the U.S.S.R. should conclude a treaty of alliance to be based on the text of the 1935 Franco-Soviet Treaty.<sup>2</sup> The French representatives also submitted the draft of a new treaty.

Considering the fundamental importance of the questions raised by de Gaulle to the Soviet-Anglo-American coalition as a whole, Stalin found it necessary to consult Churchill and Roosevelt. Both of them found it preferable that the issue of the post-war frontier between France and Germany be settled subsequent to the collapse of Germany. They had no objection to a Franco-Soviet mutual aid pact. At the same time, the British Government suggested that "it might be best of all ... to conclude a tripartite treaty", that is, a treaty of alliance between Great Britain, the U.S.S.R. and France.<sup>3</sup>

The Soviet Government was willing to accept the French proposal for an alliance between the U.S.S.R. and France,

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<sup>1</sup> Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires de Guerre. Le Salut. 1944-1946*, Librairie Plon, Paris, 1959, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Soviet-French Relations... Documents*, pp. 339, 340, 343, 344, 346 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 281.

considering it to be of interest to both sides. But on receiving Churchill's proposals, it indicated that it was ready to conclude a tripartite treaty.<sup>1</sup>

However, de Gaulle was emphatically opposed to Churchill's proposals. The French, he said, want Allied commitments to take effect immediately, "but Britain is an ally that is difficult to deal with, one that is always late everywhere." The position of France, he declared, "prompts the French to desire first and foremost a mutual aid pact with the Soviet Union". After that, it would be possible to think of a pact with Britain. Furthermore, de Gaulle pointed out that it would not be an easy thing for France to conclude a treaty with Britain. In that context, he expressed his suspicions as regards the British Government's policy in respect of Germany.<sup>2</sup>

Considering de Gaulle's position, the Soviet Government consented to the conclusion of a bilateral Soviet-French treaty. As the text of the treaty was discussed, the Soviet representatives called for it to include an Article providing for both countries to stay out of opposing coalitions. The French representatives agreed to that proposal.<sup>3</sup>

In the meantime, the British press began publishing articles calling for a West European bloc to be created under British auspices. It was considered as one designed to assure Britain's dominant position in Western Europe. Furthermore, the British ruling establishment intended to aim that bloc against the Soviet Union. In view of those plans, Stalin asked de Gaulle about his attitude to the idea of a Western bloc. The head of the French Provisional Government assured him that France did not favour those plans. There was only one bloc, he said, that could operate in Europe, the bloc that was directed against German aggression.<sup>4</sup>

The Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance between the U.S.S.R. and France was signed on December 10. The treaty provided for the two nations to continue the war against Germany until her final surrender and to lend each other all possible aid in the war (Article 1). Both parties undertook to make no separate armistice or treaty of peace with Germany without mutual consent (Article 2). If either party found itself at war with Germany, the other would imme-

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet-French Relations... Documents*, pp. 360, 368 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 377, 379.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 352.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 359.

diately render it all possible aid and assistance (Article 4). The U.S.S.R. and France undertook to form no alliance, or enter into a coalition hostile to the other party (Article 5). The treaty was concluded for 20 years, subject to automatic prolongation unless terminated by either party.<sup>1</sup>

The discussions during de Gaulle's visit to Moscow covered some other issues as well. The head of the French Provisional Government agreed to the Soviet Government's view that Poland's Eastern frontier should pass along the Curzon Line while its Western border should follow the Oder and Neisse.<sup>2</sup> Upon the Soviet Government's initiative, it was agreed that the French Provisional Government and the Polish Committee of National Liberation would exchange unofficial representatives.<sup>3</sup>

Consideration of the Franco-German frontier was deferred. It was impossible to settle it without the participation of representatives of the U.S. and Britain.

The Soviet Government regarded the signing of the pact with France and the talks held to that end as essential factors in the development of Soviet-French relations as well as in the resolution of the problems of peace and security in Europe in the post-war period.

The treaty had quite a few more aspects of value to France. De Gaulle considered it to be an important step forward towards regaining the international position of France as a Great Power and assuring France an opportunity to follow an independent foreign policy.<sup>4</sup> On his return to Paris, Georges Bidault declared: "Threatened by the same peril, the peril called Germany, militarist Hitler Germany, the Germany that has been producing a new philosophy of force for every generation, France and the Soviet Union, which had to make themselves safe, have, indeed, made themselves safe from this common peril."<sup>5</sup>

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The international position of the Soviet Union changed essentially in 1944. With a considerable superiority in terms

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 384-385.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 347, 350, 358, 375.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 381-382. The exchange of representatives took place late in December 1944.

<sup>4</sup> See: N. N. Molchanov, *General de Gaulle*, Moscow, 1980 (in Russian).

<sup>5</sup> *Soviet-French Relations... Documents*, p. 389. (in Russian).

of manpower and hardware to rely on, the Soviet armies pressed on irresistibly all along the Soviet-German Front. The Soviet national frontier had all been regained. Chasing the enemy, the Soviet forces entered the territory of some foreign countries. That was the start of the Soviet Union's liberating mission in Europe.

Following the cross-Channel operation of the United States and Great Britain cooperation of the Three Powers in Western Europe became closer. While in earlier times it had been predominantly political and economic, from now on it was more than ever before military too. The opening of the Second Front in Europe signified the approaching victory over Nazi Germany. Soviet diplomacy continued to do everything possible to strengthen Three-Power cooperation.

Now it was problems of post-war peace settlement that came to figure more and more prominently in Three-Power relations. The Soviet Government attached paramount importance to the adoption of all the necessary measures to prevent any German aggression in the future. The Three Powers began their preparations for the establishment of an international organisation designed to ensure peace and international security after the war.

At the same time, as Germany ceased to pose a danger to Britain and as it became obvious that the U.S.S.R. would emerge from the war not weakened but as one of the world's mightiest Powers, anti-Soviet trends began to gain ground in the policies of the British and United States ruling establishment. Guided by their class interests, that is, by their imperialist and reactionary aspirations, Britain and the United States tried hard to prevent any erosion of the capitalist order of things and any social change in the countries involved in the war.

The problem of knocking Nazi Germany's allies—Finland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary—out of the war had been resolved. That meant the utter collapse of the fascist bloc in Europe and the isolation of Nazi Germany. While resolving the issues which arose as Germany's former allies dropped out of the war, the Soviet Government consistently applied the democratic principles of the post-war peace structure.

The international position of the Soviet Union had been consolidated, its prestige among the peoples of the Allied nations had risen high and so had its role in resolving the problems of post-war peace settlement.



## **Chapter VI**

### **THE CRIMEA CONFERENCE**

#### **THE FRONT-LINES IN EARLY 1945**

By early 1945, virtually all the German-occupied territory of the Soviet Union had been liberated,<sup>1</sup> but the war continued. The defeat of Nazi Germany had to be completed. There was no other way to peace except through Berlin.

The Soviet armies were finishing preparations for yet another major offensive, the Vistula-Oder operation. The object behind it was to free the whole of Poland and advance into Germany.

American and British troops, which had landed in Northern France in June 1944, reached Germany's Western frontiers by the end of the year but had to stop there.

Germany found herself in a ring of fire, having lost almost all the land she had captured since the outbreak of the war. Berlin had to realise that the advance into German territory both from the East and from the West was imminent. But Hitler and his close associates were still casting about for a way out so as to avoid defeat and unconditional surrender. They pinned their greatest hopes on a split of the anti-Hitler coalition. The Nazis banked on the class hatred for Socialism typical of the reactionary ruling elements of all capitalist countries.

The German High Command decided to launch a counter-offensive in the Ardennes in order to induce the Governments of Britain and the United States to a separate peace. The Nazis intended to break through to Antwerp, cutting off British and American troops in Belgium and Holland from their main forces. Having started the offensive on December 16, 1944, the German forces breached the front and advanced 90 km. That offensive was stopped, and the Brit-

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<sup>1</sup> North-Western Latvia was the only piece of Soviet territory with German forces still present: 38 German divisions were encircled within the so-called Kurland Cauldron away from the front-lines.

ish and American forces began to push the Germans back. Yet, the situation on the Western Front remained tense and complex. The Governments of Britain and the United States were deeply concerned over the subsequent course of events. What distinguished the overall position of the British and American forces in the winter of 1944/45, the author of an official British history of the Second World War John Ehrman points out, was that not only had the Allies reached a stalemate on the Western Front, but all their operational plans in Europe were in danger.<sup>1</sup>

In those circumstances, Winston Churchill sent an alarming message to Stalin on January 6, 1945. "The battle in the West is very heavy," he wrote, "and, at any time, large decisions may be called for from the Supreme Command. You know yourself from your own experience how very anxious the position is when a very broad front has to be defended after temporary loss of the initiative. It is General Eisenhower's great desire and need to know in outline what you plan to do, as this obviously affects all his and our major decisions... I shall be grateful if you can tell me whether we can count on a major Russian offensive on the Vistula front, or elsewhere, during January... I regard the matter as urgent."<sup>2</sup>

The head of the Soviet Government replied to Churchill as early as January 7: "We are mounting an offensive, but at the moment the weather is unfavourable. Still, in view of our Allies' position on the Western Front, GHQ of the Supreme Command have decided to complete preparations at a rapid rate and, regardless of weather, to launch large-scale offensive operations along the entire Central Front not later than the second half of January. Rest assured we shall do all in our power to support the valiant forces of our Allies."<sup>3</sup>

That reply signified that the British and American forces would not find themselves in an impasse, but would be able to plan another offensive for the subsequent period, rather than going over to the defensive. One could see that quite well from Churchill's following message to Stalin: "I am most grateful to you for your thrilling message. I have sent it over to General Eisenhower for his eye only. May

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<sup>1</sup> John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. VI, *October 1944-August 1945*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1956.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. 1, p. 294.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294-295.

all good fortune rest upon your noble venture... We are both shoving everything in we can. The news you give me will be a great encouragement to General Eisenhower because it gives him the assurance that German reinforcements will have to be split between both our flaming fronts."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet armed strength had further increased by early 1945. The forces in the field together with the reserve forces had 9,412,000 men, 144,200 guns and mortars, 15,700 tanks and self-propelled guns, and 22,600 combat aircraft.<sup>2</sup>

The Wehrmacht had 9,420,000 men, 110,100 guns and mortars, up to 13,200 tanks and assault guns and more than 7,000 combat aircraft.<sup>3</sup> The Germans thus still had sufficient strength. But the German troops had to fight on two fronts—the Eastern and the Western—which made their position difficult.

On January 12, ahead of the fixed date, the Soviet forces launched a massive offensive off the Vistula line. That came together with a Soviet offensive in other sectors of the Soviet-German front. Overcoming the long-established depth-echeloned enemy defence lines, the Soviet armies made a sweeping advance.

That powerful Soviet offensive meant that Britain and the United States had no more cause for concern over the situation on the Western Front. On January 17, Churchill and Roosevelt sent Stalin yet another message of thanks and congratulations upon the action of the Soviet armies.<sup>4</sup>

That was the general background to the Crimea Conference.

### THE CONFERENCE OPENED

It was as early as the summer of 1944 that Franklin D. Roosevelt began to contemplate another Big-Three Summit. Considering the Soviet offensive, Harry Hopkins felt there was no chance of persuading Stalin to attend one outside the U.S.S.R. Therefore, he urged the President to go to the Crimea. Roosevelt consented. "All of the President's close

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Moscow, 1979, Vol. 10, p. 28 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. 1, p. 300; Churchill wrote in his memoirs that the Russians had accomplished a "fine deed ... to hasten their vast offensive, no doubt at a heavy cost in life" (Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, p. 244).

advisers," Hopkins wrote subsequently, "were opposed to his going to Russia; most did not like or trust the Russians anyway and could not understand why the President of the United States should cart himself all over the world to meet Stalin. This argument carried no weight with me. The all-important thing was to get the meeting." As Hopkins pointed out, Churchill was also "so anxious to have the meeting that he would have gone to Moscow if necessary".<sup>1</sup>

Since there was to be another presidential election in the U.S. in November, Roosevelt suggested rescheduling the Conference for early 1945 when he had taken office as president for another term.

The Governments of the U.S. and Britain pressed for the Conference to be called in the hope of jointly imposing their will on the Soviet Government as regards the international issues on the agenda. They were particularly anxious about the problems of Eastern Europe. For as many as three years, Britain and the U.S. had not "interfered" with the Soviet Union's fighting the German forces virtually all alone. But now they were preoccupied lest the U.S.S.R. should also get down to independently settling some questions of post-war peace settlement in areas liberated by the Soviet forces from the German aggressors.

On Churchill's proposal, the Conference was codenamed "Argonaut" in the correspondence between the three heads of government. According to an ancient Greek legend, a company of Greeks sailed in the ship *Argo* into the Black Sea in search of the Golden Fleece. The aims which Churchill and Roosevelt set out to achieve as they followed their traces were, however, incomparably more important.

Hopkins arrived in London on January 21. He met Churchill and Eden to discuss all the problems which were to be considered at the Conference. Secretary of State Stettinius talked over the same items with Churchill and Eden at Malta on January 31 and February 1. Later on, Roosevelt, who had also reached Malta on February 2, joined the preliminary Anglo-American talks. As a result of all those meetings, the representatives of the U.S. and Britain concerted the position of the Two Powers on all major issues. Official American historian John L. Snell admits that though efforts were made both before and during the Yalta Conference to assure the Russians that they "were not con-

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<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 845.

fronted by a hostile Anglo-American bloc", the fact is that the British and American diplomats had worked out what he described as "certain problems of teamwork", before going to Yalta, which amounted to "co-ordination of strategy" at the Conference.<sup>1</sup>

Since the war continued, the U.S. and Britain wanted their cooperation with the Soviet Union to go on. The German offensive in the Ardennes had demonstrated once again that the Reich was still very powerful. It was understood perfectly well in London and in Washington that it would have been impossible to put Germany to rout without the Soviet Union's participation. "What would have happened," Winston Churchill wrote afterwards, "if we had quarrelled with Russia while the Germans still had two or three hundred divisions on the fighting front?"<sup>2</sup> The United States of America was even more interested in cooperation with the Soviet Union. A document of the U.S. State Department, prepared for the Conference, underlined in no uncertain terms: "*We must have the support of the Soviet Union to defeat Germany. We sorely need the Soviet Union in the war against Japan...*"<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the questions of military cooperation, the conferees were to discuss many foreign policy problems: the treatment of Germany after her defeat, the establishment of an international organisation to maintain peace and security, the Three-Power policy towards the liberated nations of Europe, the future of Poland, to mention just a few.

The second Three-Power Summit was held in the Crimea from February 4 to 11, 1945. The Soviet Union was represented by Stalin, the United States of America, by Roosevelt and the United Kingdom, by Churchill. Attending the Conference together with them were the Foreign Ministers Molotov, Stettinius and Eden as well as other diplomatic and military officials.

On the Soviet delegation's proposal, it was decided to call the meeting the Crimea Conference (it is quite often also called the Yalta Conference). The discussions took place at Livadia Palace, near Yalta.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Meaning of Yalta. Big Three Diplomacy and the New Balance of Power*, Edited by John L. Snell, Baton Rouge, 1956, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, p. 352.

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. Diplomatic Papers. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1955, p. 95. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

No agenda was agreed upon in advance. The delegations had just informed each other what major issues they would like to discuss at the Conference. These issues were taken up mostly in order of importance.

## HASTENING THE DEFEAT OF THE AGGRESSORS

Hastening the defeat of the aggressors remained the key item to discuss. Therefore, the Conference opened on February 4 with a review of the war scene and the efforts to coordinate action of the Allied Armed Forces.

A. I. Antonov, Deputy Chief of the Red Army General Staff, reported that the offensive of Soviet forces was to have been undertaken late in January 1945. Yet in view of the alarming situation on the Western Front due to the German attack in the Ardennes Soviet forces launched an offensive on January 12. By February 1, that is, during 18 days of the advance, the Soviet troops moved forward up to 500 km (25-30 km per day). The enemy lost 300,000 killed and 100,000 were taken prisoner. Antonov called for the Allied troops to speed up their advance on the Western Front for which the situation was very favourable.<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. Army Chief of Staff, George Marshall, informed the conferees that the German offensive in the Ardennes had been checked. Some of the British and American forces would launch an offensive on February 8 and move on towards Berlin<sup>2</sup> (at that time, Soviet forces were 60 km away from Berlin, and British and American forces, 500 km away).

In regard to the Soviet forces, Churchill said that he wished to express the "gratitude of England ... for the massive power and successes of the Soviet offensive". Roosevelt declared himself to be in agreement with Churchill.<sup>3</sup>

The conferees noted the inadequate coordination of action by the forces of the Three Powers and worked out measures

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<sup>1</sup> *The Soviet Union at International Conferences During the Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945*, Vol. 4, *The Crimea Conference of the Leaders of the Three Allied Powers, the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Great Britain (February 4-11, 1945)*, Collected Documents (hereinafter, *The Crimea Conference*), Moscow, 1979, pp. 53-56 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 575.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

to improve it. The discussions of the military representatives of the Three Powers continued throughout the Conference.

The opening session, marked as it was by a common desire for closer cooperation in the military defeat of Germany, got the Conference off to a good start.

The official communique issued at the end of the conference stated (in the chapter "The Defeat of Germany"):

"We have considered and determined the military plans of the three allied powers for the final defeat of the common enemy. The timing, scope and coordination of new and even more powerful blows to be launched by our armies and air forces into the heart of Germany ... have been fully agreed and planned in detail... Nazi Germany is doomed. The German people will only make the cost of their defeat heavier to themselves by attempting to continue a hopeless resistance."<sup>1</sup>

## THE GERMAN QUESTION

The second session of the Conference (February 5) examined the political problems arising as the war was drawing to a close. It was decided, first and foremost, to discuss the German question, that is, the treatment of Germany after her defeat.

The Soviet Government always proceeded from the need to concert the policies of the Allied Powers towards Germany and to act together to prevent Germany from ever again threatening the peace of Europe. But there was no agreement as yet on many aspects of the German question. When the Soviet forces found themselves near Berlin as a result of their offensive which had begun in January 1945, London and Washington began to think of what might happen if the Soviet armies got to Germany's capital while there was still no final Big Three agreement about their common policy towards Germany. Therefore, the Governments of Great Britain and the United States were likewise anxious for the Three-Power stance on the German question to be concerted without delay.<sup>2</sup> But, as an American liberally critical historian Diane Shaver Clemens stated, by Yalta, the West

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, pp. 969-970.

<sup>2</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. V, p. 272.

was shying away from a harsh policy against post-war Germany and moving toward the idea of reconstructing Germany on pre-war lines—minus the Nazi hierarchy. Eden and other members of the British Government even contemplated a post-war Anglo-German alliance.<sup>1</sup>

Extensive preparatory work had been done by the European Advisory Commission (EAC) in London. As I said earlier, the EAC had worked out an instrument on the unconditional surrender of Germany. It had likewise drawn up the texts of an agreement on zones of occupation in Germany and the administration of Greater Berlin and an agreement on the Control Machinery for Germany. Those documents were endorsed by the Crimea Conference with certain clarifications and amendments.

It was decided to allocate to France a zone of occupation in Germany, formed out of the British and American zones. A French representative was to become a member of the Allied Control Council for Germany.<sup>2</sup>

The Crimea Conference also examined the possible dismemberment of Germany. On January 20, within a fortnight of the opening session, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. Averell Harriman told Molotov that the President would like to talk the matter over at the Conference.<sup>3</sup>

In a note to Churchill on the eve of the Conference Eden also called for it to direct the European Advisory Commission to examine and make joint recommendations regarding the Three-Power policy towards Germany and to give particular attention to the dismemberment and decentralisation of Germany.<sup>4</sup>

At the Conference Roosevelt said that it should decide in principle the question of the dismemberment of Germany whereupon it would be possible to thrash out the details. He believed that while laying down the terms of unconditional surrender for the Germans, they had to be told that "the intention of the Allies is to *dismember Germany*". The President stressed that he saw no other way out except dismemberment. Perhaps, he added, *the zones would be the first step towards the dismemberment of Germany*.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Diane Shaver Clemens, *Yalta*, pp. 137-138.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, pp. 970, 978.

<sup>3</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, p. 12 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, p. 512.

<sup>5</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, pp. 65, 67, 68—in Russian. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)



Setting out his position, Churchill declared that the British Government "agreed in principle to dismemberment". Prussia, he said, was the main cause behind all misfortunes. One can see, he said, that "Prussia separated from other German states [would have] her power greatly reduced". Churchill urged the establishment of yet another big German state to the south—possibly with its capital at Vienna. The British Government, Churchill said, was prepared "to accept the principle of dismemberment of Germany" and set up a committee for "the study of the procedure for the dismemberment of Germany".<sup>1</sup>

On Stalin's reactions to the British Premier's comments, the Protocol of the Proceedings of the Conference said that he fully understood the Prime Minister's difficulties in setting out a detailed plan for the dismemberment of Germany. That was correct. But neither did he suggest that a detailed plan must be drawn up. However, the issue had to be settled in principle and recorded in the terms of the unconditional surrender.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet delegation had produced no draft for the dismemberment of Germany or the creation of new States on her territory either before or then.

A Committee consisting of Anthony Eden, the U.S. Ambassador in London John G. Winant and Soviet Ambassador in London Fyodor Gusev was set up after the Conference to study the procedure for the dismemberment of Germany.<sup>3</sup>

The Soviet delegation called upon the Conference to establish how the surrender of Germany would take place since one could not rule out the possibility of the Germans trying to surrender not to all the three major Allied Powers, but only to two of them, Great Britain and the United States. Stalin inquired, in particular, whether the Allied Powers would let Hitler stay in power if he surrendered unconditionally. He believed that it was impossible to allow Hitler to continue in power. If everybody agreed, that should be clearly stated at the time of Germany's surrender. Suppose, furthermore, a German group had declared, Stalin went on to say, that they had overthrown Hitler. Would the Allies be willing to deal with such a group?

Churchill replied that the terms of Germany's surrender

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, pp. 612, 615, 978.

<sup>2</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, pp. 68-69 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.

had been worked out. He proposed to dwell on the possible course of events. If Hitler or Himmler, he said, should offer to surrender unconditionally, the answer was clear—they would not negotiate under any circumstances with any war criminals. It was more probable that Hitler would be killed or in hiding, but another group of Germans might indicate their willingness to accept unconditional surrender. In such a case, the Three Allies would immediately consult together as to whether they could deal with this group, and if so the terms of unconditional surrender would immediately be submitted; if not, the war would continue and they would occupy the entire country. Unconditional surrender he continued, ruled out an armistice agreement... "The terms of unconditional surrender are terms on which the fighting stops."

After hearing that, Stalin stressed only one point: the terms of surrender must be signed.<sup>1</sup> Subsequent events showed how essential that conversation had been.

On the Soviet delegation's initiative, the Conference discussed the question of the German reparations. The Nazi invaders had wrought tremendous destruction on the territory of the U.S.S.R., which stood no comparison with what had ever been perpetrated by any other aggressors in the history of mankind. The Soviet Union wanted the aggressors to make up at least some of the damage they had caused. That was a matter of no mean importance for other Nazi-occupied countries as well. On their arrival in the Crimea, the British and American representatives "were all impressed ... by the widespread war destruction", above all, in Sevastopol and also by the evidence of the atrocities of the German and Romanian fascist invaders.<sup>2</sup>

While setting out the Soviet delegation's case, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. Ivan Maisky said the suggestion was to accept reparations in kind, rather than in cash: first, by impounding factory and plant equipment, ships, rolling stock, etc.; second, through commodity deliveries to be spread over 10 years. He proposed that the total sum of reparations due to the U.S.S.R. should be set at 10,000 million dollars, pointing out that even that was "a very insignificant proportion of the total direct material damage sustained by the Soviet

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<sup>1</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, pp. 64, 66-67, 69 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., *Roosevelt and the Russians. The Yalta Conference*, Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, New York, 1949, p. 81.

Union". The Soviet delegation proposed that the total reparations be fixed at 20,000 million dollars.<sup>1</sup> The U.S.S.R. considered it necessary to take into account the pressing needs of the German people. The Soviet representatives declared at the Conference that the idea they had in mind while drafting the plan for German reparations was to create the conditions for the German people to exist in the post-war years "at an equivalent of the middle European standard".<sup>2</sup>

Previously, Churchill had more than once indicated his agreement to the U.S.S.R. being recompensed for the damage caused to it by the German aggression. Now, however, he stubbornly objected to any definite sum of reparations being fixed.

The Conference was drawing to a close but this issue remained unsettled. When it came up for discussion again on February 10, Stalin pressed hard for the Soviet proposal to be accepted. Debating with Churchill, he would not mince his words: "Perhaps, the Conference does not want the Russians to receive any reparations at all."<sup>3</sup>

Describing the situation at that meeting, Stettinius wrote afterwards: "Stalin, on the question of German reparations, spoke with great emotion, which was in sharp contrast to his usual calm, even manner. On several occasions he arose, stepped behind his chair, and spoke from that position, gesturing to emphasize his point. The terrible German destruction in Russia obviously had moved him deeply. Although he did not orate or even raise his voice, he spoke with intensity."<sup>4</sup>

In producing their arguments to prove that Germany was capable of paying out the afore-said sum of reparations, the Soviet representatives referred to the fact that in the pre-war years, she had spent up to 6,000 million dollars a year in various ways on armaments. Even the British Premier admitted that it was a very important consideration!<sup>5</sup>

The American delegation agreed to the sum of reparations indicated by the Soviet representatives as the basis for subsequent negotiations, but the British refused to accept it.

Consequent on that discussion, it was decided that "Ger-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, pp. 76-77, 115 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>4</sup> Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., *Roosevelt and the Russians. The Yalta Conference*, pp. 263-264.

<sup>5</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, p. 81 (in Russian).

many must pay in kind for the losses caused by her to the Allied nations in the course of the war". An inter-Allied Reparation Commission with headquarters in Moscow was established. The Protocol of the Proceedings of the Crimea Conference recorded that the Soviet and American delegations had agreed that the Reparation Commission "should take in its initial studies as a basis for discussion the suggestion of the Soviet Government that the total sum of the reparation ... should be 20 billion dollars and that 50% of it should go to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." The British delegation was of the opinion, the Protocol stated, that pending consideration of the reparation question by the Moscow Reparation Commission, "no figures of reparation should be mentioned".<sup>1</sup>

The British Government's stand on the reparation question indicated that it wanted the Soviet people to take longer to heal the grave wounds inflicted on them by the German invasion.

### THE CREDIT ISSUE

While reviewing the Soviet post-war national economic recovery, it is worthwhile referring to the issue of American credits. The United States Government had already raised it right before the Three-Power Foreign Ministers Conference in Moscow.

In the meantime, the credit issue engaged the attention of the American business community. That was due, notably, to a decline of industrial production in the United States in 1944. Of course, U.S. businessmen well remembered the acute economic crisis which had broken out soon after the end of the First World War. So in an effort to moderate inevitable post-war economic difficulties in the U.S., they considered appreciably expanding exports to the Soviet Union. In the summer of 1944, the President of the United States Chamber of Commerce Eric A. Johnston visited the U.S.S.R. His conversation with Stalin on June 26 covered many issues, including that of a long-term credit to buy American goods after the war.<sup>2</sup> The United States business community realised that the U.S.S.R. would be in a po-

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, pp. 978-979.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. 1944*, Vol. 4, pp. 972-974.

sition to make extensive purchases in the United States only if offered such a credit.

At the same time, U.S. monopolies were planning to use the credits to the Soviet Union as a means to try and make it economically dependent on the United States. American historian Ralph Levering stated that the intention was to turn the U.S.S.R. into "an economic appendage of the United States" which would provide raw materials ... and receive in return expensive American manufactured goods.<sup>1</sup>

The United States Government reverted to that question early in 1945, on the eve of the Crimea Conference. It sought once more to exploit the discussions on credits so as to make the Soviet Union yield ground over the political issues under consideration.

In a letter of January 1, 1945, to Roosevelt, the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau pointed out that credits to the Soviet Union "will have definite and long-range benefits for the United States as well as for Russia... I am convinced that if we were to come forward now and present to the Russians a concrete plan to aid them in the reconstruction period, it would contribute a great deal towards ironing out many difficulties we have been having with respect to their problems and policies."<sup>2</sup>

Shortly afterwards, Morgenthau submitted a memorandum to Roosevelt in which he suggested granting 10 billion dollars' worth of credit to the U.S.S.R. for the purchase of American goods. He felt it possible to have the credit repaid over a period of 35 years at 2 per cent annual interest. The memorandum stated that Russia had enough resources for credit repayment. "This credit to Russia," Morgenthau wrote to Roosevelt, "would be a major step in your program to provide 60 million jobs in the post-war period."<sup>3</sup> However, the U.S. State Department opposed the transmission of that offer to the Soviet Government as it wanted to use the credit issue as a bargaining lever to achieve its ends as regards "the many other political and economic problems".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph B. Levering, *American Opinion on the Russian Alliance, 1939-1945*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1976, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> Edward R. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians. The Yalta Conference*, p. 120.

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, p. 315.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.

Naturally, the Soviet Union, whose national economy had been badly damaged by the attack of Germany and her allies, was most interested in receiving long-term credits from the United States so as to be able to place orders in the U.S.A. essential to its national economic recovery. On January 3, Molotov handed U.S. Ambassador Harriman an aide-memoire stating that, having in mind the repeated statements of American public figures concerning the desirability of receiving large Soviet orders for the post-war period, the Soviet Government considered it possible to place orders on the basis of long-term credits to the amount of six billion dollars. The credits were to be repaid within 30 years with annual interest fixed at  $2\frac{1}{4}$  per cent.<sup>1</sup>

In reporting to Washington about that offer, Harriman, being of the same mind as the State Department, stressed that the question of the credit should be "tied into overall diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union" and made conditional on its "behavior in international matters".<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. State Department's document, prepared on that subject for the American delegation to the Crimea Conference, stated once again that post-war credits to the U.S.S.R. "can serve as a useful instrument" in relations between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.<sup>3</sup>

Hence Washington wanted to use credits to the Soviet Union as a means to bring pressure to bear on it in order to further its imperialist foreign policy ambitions.

In the course of the conference, however, this issue was touched upon only during the breakfast of the three Foreign Ministers at the Soviet delegation's residence on February 5. As the economic problems of Germany were discussed, Molotov indicated that the Soviet Government expected to receive reparations from Germany in kind and long-term American credits. Stettinius said he personally was ready to discuss the credit question.<sup>4</sup>

That issue was not raised any more during the Crimea Conference. But that did not mean at all that it had not been mentioned as other matters were discussed.

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, pp. 310-311.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 313.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 610.

## INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ORGANISATION ESTABLISHED

The United States set much store by having the Crimea Conference settle the question of creating an international organisation for the maintenance of peace and security. The U.S. ruling circles expected they would play the leading part in it. They hoped that it would be an essential step forward towards world domination by the United States.

The Soviet Union also considered it necessary for such an organisation to be established in the hope that it could be used as an instrument to prevent another world war, strengthen the peace and promote international cooperation.<sup>1</sup> But considering the record of the League of Nations, the Soviet Government wanted to make sure that the new world body, with capitalist States making up the overwhelming majority of its members, could not be used against the interests of the U.S.S.R. So it attached fundamental importance to the voting procedure in its Security Council, the issue that had not been settled at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference. The Soviet Government insisted on the principle of unanimity of the Council's permanent members in settling the questions of safeguarding peace and security.

Even foreign authors have been pointing out that the draft U.S. Charter which existed at the time could not be considered favourable for the U.S.S.R. Under that draft, the Western Powers would have had a dominant position in the General Assembly. The Soviet Union would have been in isolation in the Security Council as well, with a 1:4 balance even among the permanent members, consequent upon the inclusion of China and France. Without the Great-Power unanimity rule laid down in the Charter, the Soviet Union could not uphold its interests in the organisation.

In his message of December 5, 1944, to Stalin, Roosevelt introduced a new proposal for the voting procedure in the Security Council, drawn up with due regard for the Soviet Government's position.<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. Government brought forward that proposal at the Crimea Conference as well. But it had supplemented it with a list of items which required the unanimity of the per-

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<sup>1</sup> Stettinius noted that this interest was evident in all of his negotiations with Soviet representatives on that subject. (Edward R. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians. The Yalta Conference*, pp. 148-149).

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, p. 661.

manent members of the Security Council to decide on. Setting out those proposals, Stettinius pointed out (on February 6) that they were entirely consistent "with the special responsibilities of the Great Powers for the preservation of the peace of the world". He pointed out that the proposals called for "unqualified unanimity of the permanent members of the Council on all major decisions relating to the preservation of peace, including all economic and military enforcement measures".<sup>1</sup>

Speaking on the subject, Stalin emphasised that Three-Power unity was the most important condition for the preservation of a lasting peace. "So it is necessary to think of the best way to ensure a united front between the Three Powers, to which France and China should be added... It is necessary to elaborate such a covenant which would most effectively prevent conflicts arising between them. That is the main task."<sup>2</sup>

After a thorough study of the American proposals, the Soviet delegation announced, on the following day, that it found them acceptable.<sup>3</sup>

That meant the question of voting in the Security Council had been settled. Roosevelt declared that he was very happy to hear of the Soviet Government's acceptance of his proposals. Consequently, he said, great progress had been made.<sup>4</sup>

The Soviet delegation called for three or, at least, two Soviet Republics—the Ukraine and Byelorussia—to enter the international organisation.<sup>5</sup>

Churchill supported the Soviet proposal. He declared he had "great sympathy with the request" and his heart went out to mighty Russia which, though bleeding, was beating down the tyrant in her path. "A nation so great as Russia with 180,000,000 people would perhaps have cause to look at the British Commonwealth with a questioning eye, if they had but one vote when their population far exceeds our own."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, p. 661.

<sup>2</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, p. 94 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>5</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, pp. 120-121 (in Russian).

<sup>6</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, pp. 714, 723. The British War Cabinet, looking into the matter on February 8, decided to accept the idea of the Ukraine and Byelorussia being seated on the international security organisation. It stated that the British Empire would be represented by 6 members, and the U.S. would in-



The U.S. delegation, while expressing its consent in principle, asked for the final decision on the subject to be deferred until the Conference for the establishment of the international organisation. The Protocol of the Proceedings of the Crimea Conference recorded that the U.S. and Britain would speak up at it in favour of the Ukraine and Byelorussia being admitted as original members of that organisation.<sup>1</sup>

There was a significant episode during the discussion of the establishment of the international organisation which most palpably revealed the truculently imperialist essence of the policy of the British ruling establishment.

As Stettinius reported to a meeting of the Heads of Government on February 9 about the results of yet another session of the three Foreign Ministers, he said that the U.S. delegation proposed that the prospective permanent members of the Council should consult each other through diplomatic channels, prior to the United Nations Conference, on trusteeship over colonial and dependent areas.

On hearing those words, Churchill "exploded". He said he was emphatically against the discussion of that issue. For so many years, he exclaimed, Great Britain had been waging so hard a struggle to preserve intact the British Commonwealth of Nations and the British Empire. That struggle would be crowned with complete success and, as long as the British flag was up over the territories of the British Crown, he would not allow any bit of that land to come up for auction with 40 States present. Never would the British Empire be put in the dock for matters of "trusteeship" over minor nations.<sup>2</sup>

Referring to the above-mentioned incident, Eden decided to find a milder wording to smooth over the impression of that manifestation of war-mongering British imperialism in his memoirs. He pointed out that Roosevelt was no better than Churchill in that respect. The American President, Eden wrote, "hoped that former colonial territories, once free of their masters, would become politically and economically dependent upon the United States".<sup>3</sup> William

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fluence the position of the Latin American States (Public Record Office, Cab. 65/51). Churchill wrote in that context about the "South American tail" of the U.S. (Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. 5 p. 297.)

<sup>1</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, pp. 132-134, 274 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> *The Memoirs of Anthony Eden. The Reckoning*, p. 593.

Leahy, also recounting the progress of discussion on that subject, pointed out that "one of Roosevelt's pet ideas, which he had discussed with me on many occasions, was a *plan for a series of strategic bases all over the world*".<sup>1</sup> The President believed that technically they could be under the trusteeship of the international security organisation which was then being created but, actually, it was the United States that, dominating this organisation, would be the master, through the instrumentality, in particular, of its bases. Roosevelt's biographer, R. Dallek, made no secret of the fact that the U.S. President's commitment to a trusteeship system was another good example of how he "*used an idealistic idea to mask a concern with power*" and "*secure strategic bases*".<sup>2</sup>

The Communiqué issued at the end of the Crimea Conference said that the Heads of Government of the Three Powers had resolved to establish with their Allies a general international organisation at the earliest possible opportunity to maintain peace and security. They agreed to convene the United Nations Conference to establish the world organisation in San Francisco on April 25, 1945. It was decided to invite the United Nations as they existed on the 8th of February, 1945, and such of the Associated Nations as had declared war on the common enemy but not later than the 1st of March, 1945.<sup>3</sup>

Churchill told the Conference that it was desirable to hold periodic Three-Power Foreign Ministers' meetings subsequently. Considering that the major war-time international conferences had been held both in the U.S. and in the U.S.S.R., without Britain being honoured even once, he suggested that the first of these meetings should be in London. Churchill's proposal and invitation were accepted.<sup>4</sup>

## DECLARATION ON LIBERATED EUROPE

The American delegation submitted a draft Declaration on Liberated Europe for the Conference to consider. That

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<sup>1</sup> William D. Leahy, *I Was There*, p. 314. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>2</sup> R. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, pp. 536, 537. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, pp. 971, 976.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 781.

was a document consisting of general-democratic principles. But its very appearance had been due to the reflections of the ruling elements of the U.S. and Britain over what could be done in Europe at the end of the Second World War to prevent the kind of revolutionary upheavals that had taken place as a result of the First World War.

There were serious apprehensions in Washington and London that, just as the Revolution of 1917 triumphed in Russia, it may well triumph now in a number of other countries. They took into account, furthermore, the experience of armed suppression of revolutions in some countries of Europe at the time. The British and U.S. imperialists were determined to resort to the same tactics, as indicated by the British armed intervention in Greece in 1944. There was also the idea to use the experience of the American Relief Administration (ARA) which did much after the First World War to stabilise the capitalist order in Europe through economic expedients. The then U.S. President, Woodrow Wilson, wrote in January 1919 that Bolshevism "cannot be stopped by force, but it can be stopped by food".<sup>1</sup>

But, compared with those years, the situation in Europe was fundamentally different. At that time, the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy and their allies (as Poland or Czechoslovakia) launched crusades against the newborn Soviet State and joined forces in suppressing the revolutions in Hungary and other countries. Now, the United States and Britain were the Soviet Union's Allies in the war. They had to concert action with the Soviet Union. Besides, they could not afford to disregard the new overall balance of forces in Europe between the capitalist States and the U.S.S.R.

A special document on the subject, prepared at the U.S. State Department, noted that there had been fundamental changes in the relative national military strengths of European States as a result of the war. "The outstanding fact to be noted," it said, "is the recent phenomenal development of the heretofore latent Russian military and economic strength—a development which seems certain to prove epochal in its bearing on future politico-mili-

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<sup>1</sup> *Organisation of American Relief in Europe, 1918-1919*, Documents Selected and Edited by S. L. Bane and R. H. Lutz, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1943, p. 177.

tary international relationships, and which has yet to reach the full scope attainable with Russian resources."

It was pointed out at the same time that Britain's military and economic strength was weaker beside Russia's. Even in the event of American intervention on the side of Britain, some in the U.S. State Department believed, it "could not, under existing conditions, defeat Russia". In other words, the U.S. "would find itself engaged in a war which it could not win".<sup>1</sup>

As regards the political sentiment in European countries, the State Department noted that "the general mood of the peoples of Europe is to the left and strongly in favor of far-reaching economic and social reforms".<sup>2</sup>

U.S. ruling circles found it necessary to stop that shift to the left before it brought about revolutionary change in the European capitalist countries involved in the war and have the positions of the reactionary forces in those countries consolidated. "We sought," American historian D. F. Fleming points out, "to preserve the power of the top social strata which had long ruled these countries."<sup>3</sup>

The document produced by the U.S. State Department on January 8, 1945, contained the proposal that the Four Powers (participants in the Conference, and France) should set up an agency to be known as the Provisional Security Council for Europe or Emergency High Commission to "achieve unity of policy and joint action" in Europe. That agency was to supervise the repatriation of some Governments in exile, the creation of interim Governments in those countries as well as "the maintenance of order", that is, the suppression of revolutionary activities. The U.S. State Department wanted that body to deal at once with the situation in Poland. The framers of the document realised that the Soviet Union would object to it. But they pointed out that "every possible effort" must be made "to induce the Soviet Government to agree".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> D. F. Fleming, *The Cold War and Its Origins. 1917-1960*. Vol. I, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1961, p. 210.

<sup>4</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, pp. 93, 94, 97, 98.

The sum and substance of that proposal was that the imperialist Powers, having a majority in the new agency, would take all possible steps to maintain or restore the old capitalist order both in the liberated countries and in those which had been Germany's Allies. That was to have been an agency to export counter-revolution. The author of an official history of Britain's war-time foreign policy, Llewellyn Woodward, points out that the essential point of the American proposal was to prevent other countries following the same course as Greece where the Communists had all but taken power into their hands.<sup>1</sup>

The British Government showed greater interest, of course, than the U.S. Administration in the post-war alignment of political forces in Europe—whether in individual States or Continent-wide. The U.S. State Department understood perfectly well that Churchill's reactionary plans could not fail to evoke grave concern. One of the documents, prepared by the U.S. State Department for Roosevelt in advance of the Crimea Conference, stated: "The Soviet Government suspects that Great Britain desires to see installed wherever possible right-wing governments which from the Soviet point of view would be hostile to the Soviet Union... Recent events in Greece will undoubtedly be widely interpreted in Moscow as confirmation of their suspicions of Great Britain's intentions."<sup>2</sup> The British Foreign Office had begun to work out appropriate plans as early as 1943, and for the Crimea Conference it had prepared a draft similar to the American one.

The American proposal was discussed during a meeting of Stettinius and Eden at Malta on January 31. The British Minister wholly supported it.

While fully sharing the plans for the export of counter-revolution which underlay the State Department's proposals, Roosevelt, nevertheless, did not find it possible to invite the Soviet Government to join a commission designed to suppress the revolutionary movements in Europe.

The U.S. delegation brought before the Conference a draft Declaration on Liberated Europe, but that did not explicitly mention the Emergency High Commission. Instead, the suggestion was to establish whenever necessary "appropriate

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<sup>1</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. V, pp. 267-268.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, p. 102.

machinery for the carrying out of the joint responsibilities".<sup>1</sup>

Naturally, the Soviet delegation realised perfectly well what was behind that American project. To change the political essence of the draft, it proposed the addition which said: "Support should be given to the political leaders of these countries who took an active part in the struggle against German occupation". The Soviet representatives emphasised that the Three Powers could not treat equally those who had supported the Germans and those who had fought against them. However, neither the American nor the British delegations were willing to accept that amendment.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet delegation succeeded in having the reference to the establishment of "appropriate machinery" replaced in the Declaration by the statement that when conditions make such action necessary, the Three Powers would "consult together" on the measures necessary.<sup>3</sup> That would mean ensuring the appropriate conditions for averting an attempt at intervention by the U.S. and Britain in the internal affairs of liberated countries of Europe by invoking this Declaration. The Declaration had now assumed the character of a general democratic document about the principles for the Three Powers to guide themselves by.

The Declaration on Liberated Europe proclaimed that the leaders of the Powers participating in the Conference had agreed to concert, during the temporary period of instability in liberated Europe, the policies of their three Governments in assisting the peoples liberated from the domination of Nazi Germany and the peoples of the former Axis satellite States of Europe to solve by democratic means their pressing political and economic problems. It was envisaged that the establishment of order in Europe must be achieved by processes which would enable the liberated peoples "to destroy the last vestiges of Nazism and Fascism and to create democratic institutions of their own choice".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, p. 863.

It was stated in the State Department's documents prepared for the Conference that the United States should declare its consent to the re-incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union and withdraw recognition of their diplomatic missions in the U.S. It was found possible to recognise the return of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union. (*FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, p. 95.)

<sup>2</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, pp. 187, 192, 195, 214 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, pp. 972, 978.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 972.

## THE POLISH QUESTION

This was the most debated issue at the Crimea Conference. It was crucial to the destinies of Poland: would the Polish people, who had begun to build a people's democratic State, have the opportunity to keep creating the new type of society, or Poland would have the old reactionary scheme of things reinstalled. The Soviet Government consistently supported the new people's democratic Polish State.

The Governments of Britain and the U.S., on the contrary, considered it necessary to do everything possible to bring the reactionary forces back to power in Poland. Churchill wrote subsequently that to him the Polish question "had indeed been the most urgent reason for the Yalta Conference"<sup>1</sup>.

However, London and Washington had to reckon with the fact that Poland had been liberated by Soviet, not British or American, forces. There was a new Polish Provisional Government in office in Warsaw, which gained more esteem and support of the mass of the people with each passing day. Now, the line-up of the London-based Polish Government in exile and its political course turned out to be so odious that even the British Government broke off all relations with its members. Churchill and Eden were in contact, with the Polish émigré leaders in London who were outside that government (S. Mikolajczyk and others).

British and American diplomacy no longer considered it possible to call for the Soviet Government to restore its relations with the London-based Polish Government in exile. It was presumed at the Foreign Office that there was no more hope for an agreement between the two Polish Governments—that of Warsaw and of London. The best option was considered to be for the Warsaw Government to be "penetrated" by Mikolajczyk and some other Polish leaders in London, who did not belong to the extreme rabid anti-Soviet right wing of the emigrant community, and for them to go to Poland as soon as possible<sup>2</sup>.

The Foreign Office prepared a brief for the British delegation at the Crimea Conference on that subject. It was believed necessary, first and foremost, to secure the Soviet Gov-

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<sup>1</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, p. 320.

<sup>2</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. III, p. 246.

ernment's consent to some modification of the Warsaw Government so as to have it widened to include Mikolajczyk and some of his supporters. That would allow Britain and the United States to recognise that Government on a provisional basis. The next step would be to ensure free elections in Poland. By that time, it would be desirable to have British and American representatives in Warsaw who could "as far as possible, influence the situation in accordance with our views".<sup>1</sup>

The British War Cabinet met on January 22 and 26 to look into the matter. It was stated that now that the German forces had been practically driven out of the whole of Poland, "the Lublin Committee with the Russian Government behind them, would grow very rapidly in power". The only counter that British diplomacy had at its disposal was recognition of the Lublin Committee as the Government of Poland. That counter should not be given up save in return for something worth having. It was considered possible to establish the Soviet-Polish frontier along the Curzon Line with territorial compensation to Poland at Germany's expense. But the War Cabinet was against the Polish frontier being advanced as far as the West Neisse.<sup>2</sup> With reference to Poland's Western frontier, Eden wrote: "We need not make the same concessions to the Lublin Poles which we were prepared to make to M. Mikolajczyk in order to obtain a solution of the Polish problem."<sup>3</sup>

The U.S. State Department, setting out its policy on Poland in advance of the Crimea Conference, was favourably inclined to the Curzon Line as Poland's Eastern frontier. Yet, it would agree to no more than insignificant compensation to Poland in the West. The U.S., furthermore, insisted that private American firms should have an opportunity to carry on business activities in Poland.<sup>4</sup> It was implied that trade and capital investment would enable the U.S. to exercise its influence in Poland.

The position of Britain and the United States regarding Poland was agreed upon during the preliminary negotiations of Eden and Stettinius at Malta on February 1. They decided to press their plans at the Conference. But, at the same time, they proceeded from the recognition that "the

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<sup>1</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. III, pp. 248, 249.

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/51.

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, p. 509.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 230-235.



question of Poland could not be allowed to disrupt the unity of the wartime coalition".<sup>1</sup>

Roosevelt was the first to state his position on the Polish question at the Crimea Conference (during the session of February 6). He declared that he was "in favor of the Curzon Line". At the same time, he stressed that he believed the most important matter about the Polish question was that of a Government which would represent all Polish parties.<sup>2</sup>

Stating the British Government's position, Churchill declared that he would "support the Curzon Line".<sup>3</sup> He also wanted the new Polish Government to include emigrants outside the London Government.

After hearing Roosevelt and Churchill, Stalin set forth the position of the Soviet Government. To the U.S.S.R., he said, the question of Poland is a matter of security, for the Soviet State has major strategic problems connected with Poland. "It is not only that Poland is a country we have a common border with. That is, of course, important, but the root of the problem lies much deeper. Throughout history, Poland has always been a corridor for the enemy attacking Russia to pass through... The Polish corridor cannot be closed mechanically from without by the Russian forces alone. It can be dependably closed only from within by Poland's own forces. For that to be possible, Poland must be strong. That is why the Soviet Union is interested in a powerful, free and independent Poland being created. The question of Poland is a life-and-death question for the Soviet State."

Turning to the issue of the Soviet-Polish frontier, Stalin pointed out that the Curzon Line had not been invented by the Russians. It had been worked out at the Paris Conference of 1919 on the basis of ethnographic data. Since neither the British nor the American representatives objected to the Curzon Line at the Crimea Conference, the matter was settled without any difficulty.

The head of the Soviet Government suggested that Poland's Western frontier should be established along the Oder and the West Neisse.<sup>4</sup>

As for the Polish Government, Stalin stressed that it was impossible to create it at the Crimea Conference. It could

<sup>1</sup> Diane Shaver Clemens, *Yalta*, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, pp. 667, 678.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 668.

<sup>4</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, p. 101 (in Russian).

he created "only with the participation of the Poles".<sup>1</sup> The Polish Government in exile, headed by Arciszewski, he went on to say, was opposed to an agreement with the Provisional Polish Government in Warsaw. The Warsaw Government paid them back in the same coin, qualifying them as traitors and turncoats.

Finally, Stalin said, as a military man, he would demand from the Government of Poland to ensure order in the rear so that the Soviet soldiers should not be shot in the back. The Warsaw Government was fulfilling that task quite well. But underground forces obedient to the London-based government had already killed 212 Soviet servicemen in Poland. They attacked supply bases to obtain arms. "In the final count, from a purely military point of view, the Warsaw Government turns out to be good, but the London Government and its agents in Poland, bad."<sup>2</sup>

On the following day, the Soviet delegation submitted a proposal suggesting that it was deemed desirable to add to the Polish Provisional Government some democratic leaders from Polish émigré circles.<sup>3</sup>

Explaining that proposal on February 8, Molotov emphasised that it was expedient to conduct negotiations about the creation of a Polish Government by means of complementing the existing one. It would be wrong to ignore the fact that there was a government in Poland already and that it was in Warsaw. That government was held in the highest esteem by the Polish people. The question of how many new members and who precisely should be included in it had to be discussed, but the decision would depend, above all, on the people who were working within Poland.<sup>4</sup>

Churchill broke in: the Conference, he said, was now at *the crucial point*. This was the question the whole world was waiting to see settled. Should the Allies separate recognising the different Polish Governments, this would be interpreted all over the world as evidence of a breach between Great Britain and the United States, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union, on the other. The consequences would be most lamentable and would stamp the Conference as a failure. The British Premier admitted that he did not agree with the views of the London-based Polish Government

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<sup>1</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, p. 101 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151-152.

and found its acts foolish but, he said, the Soviet proposals "do not go nearly far enough".<sup>1</sup>

The American delegation set about looking for a mutually acceptable compromise solution. It submitted its proposals on February 9. These had taken into account the position of the Soviet Government to a certain extent. The document acknowledged that the Polish Governmental question could be solved only by the Poles themselves. All the three of us agree, it went on to say, that the Government must be composed of members of the present Polish Provisional Government and include, in addition, representatives of other democratic forces inside Poland and some Polish democratic leaders from abroad. It was envisaged that Molotov, Harri-man and Clark Kerr would consult together in Moscow, primarily with the members of the present Provisional Government and with other democratic leaders both from within Poland and from abroad, having in view the reorganisation of the present Government. The Provisional Government of National Unity thus created would be recognised by the Three Allied Powers. That Government must undertake to hold free elections. The American proposal suggested the following formula: "That the present Polish Provisional Government be reorganised into a fully representative government based on all democratic forces in Poland and including democratic leaders from Poland abroad."<sup>2</sup>

The British delegation's "revised formula" was largely co-incident with the American proposal.<sup>3</sup>

The rest of the debate was about whether Poland *should create a new Government or the one in Warsaw should be re-organised*.

Striving for mutual understanding, the Soviet delegation agreed at the Heads of Government meeting of February 9 to accept the American proposal as a basis. But instead of the American formula, the Soviet delegation proposed the following one: "The present Provisional Government of Poland should be reorganised on a wider democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from those living abroad."<sup>4</sup>

Having studied the Soviet proposal, Roosevelt declared

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 153-154.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 167-168.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> FRUS. *The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, p. 842.

that continuous progress had been made. Churchill subscribed to the President's view.<sup>1</sup>

In the course of the discussion, the British Premier and the U.S. President more than once acknowledged the unchallengeable reason behind the Soviet preoccupation that there should be no difficulties on the territory of Poland for the Soviet forces fighting against Germany. Nor could they fail to recognise the Soviet Union's indisputable right to have its security safeguarded against eventual renewed German aggression.

American and, particularly, British representatives insisted that the Ambassadors of the Three Powers in Warsaw should be asked to supervise the elections. The Soviet delegation declared that such supervision would offend the Poles.<sup>2</sup> Stettinius agreed at the meeting of Foreign Ministers on February 10 to withdraw that proposal. But Eden insisted on that point being retained in the resolution.

The British and American delegations still refused to accept Poland's Western frontier as passing along the Oder and the West Neisse. Roosevelt suggested that the best procedure would be to say nothing at all in the final Communique about Poland's frontiers. However, the Soviet representatives insisted on the Communique stating that Poland's Eastern frontier would pass along the Curzon Line. They found it possible to allow for less accuracy in delimiting Poland's Western frontier. Since Churchill's stand on the issue coincided with the Soviet position, Roosevelt withdrew his proposal.<sup>3</sup> The decision on the Polish question had thus been concerted.

The Communique issued at the end of the Conference said that the following agreement had been achieved on the question of Poland:

"A new situation has been created in Poland as a result of her complete liberation by the Red Army. This calls for the establishment of a Polish Provisional Government which can be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of Western Poland. The Provisional Government which is now functioning in Poland should therefore be reorganised on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from the Poles abroad. This new Government should then be called

<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, pp. 847, 852.

<sup>2</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, p. 191 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity."

A commission, composed of Molotov, Harriman and Clark Kerr, was authorised to consult "in the first instance in Moscow with members of the present Provisional Government and with other Polish democratic leaders from within Poland and from abroad, with a view to the reorganisation of the present government along the above lines". The Governments of the U.S.S.R., Britain and the U.S. would then establish diplomatic relations with it. It was envisaged that this Government should hold elections as soon as possible.

On the question of Poland's frontiers, the Communiqué said that her Eastern frontier should follow the Curzon Line with digressions from it in some regions of five to eight kilometres in favour of Poland. The Heads of the Three Governments recognised that Poland must receive "substantial accessions of territory in the North and the West". They said that the opinion of the new Polish Government of National Unity should be sought on the extent of these accessions.<sup>1</sup>

For all his efforts, Churchill did not manage to carry out his own long-term programme at the Conference. But a more realistic programme outlined by the Foreign Office on that issue on the eve of the Crimea Conference was carried out, to all intents and purposes. Churchill was pleased with that. He cabled to the War Cabinet to say that what had been agreed upon at the Conference concerning Poland, was a "very good draft".<sup>2</sup> The War Cabinet shared his opinion.<sup>3</sup>

The Soviet delegation beat off the diplomatic attack on the new popular democratic Government of Poland. The decisions of the Conference reflected the actual state of things following the liberation of Poland. The compromise worked out at the Conference proved to be the basis on which the Polish governmental question was subsequently settled, although not without difficulties.

## THE YUGOSLAV QUESTION

The Yugoslav question was also considered at the Crimea Conference. The Soviet and British delegations called for enforcing the agreement concluded on November 1, 1944.

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, pp. 973, 974.

<sup>2</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. III, p. 271.

<sup>3</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/51.

between the Chairman of the National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, and the Prime Minister of the Royal Yugoslav Government in London, Ivan Šubašić, which provided for a unitary Yugoslav Government to be formed.

The resolution adopted by the Conference recommended to Tito and Šubašić that the agreement between them should be put into effect immediately.<sup>1</sup>

### CONVENTION ON THE STRAITS

The U.S.S.R. raised the question at the Conference of the need to amend the Montreux Convention of 1936 on the Straits. Setting out the position of the British Government, Churchill declared that the British were in favour of a revision of the Convention. Russia with its great Black Sea, he said, could not be satisfied with the existing situation. Roosevelt agreed with this view. Stalin pointed out that the Convention was out of date. It had Japan, now engaged in the war against the Allied Powers, as a party to it. The Convention was linked with the non-existent League of Nations. Turkey had the right of closing the Straits whenever she wished to. "It is necessary," Stalin said, "to change the procedure which has so far existed without any damage to the sovereignty of Turkey." He proposed that the Conference of Foreign Ministers should take up the matter when it met a few months later.<sup>2</sup>

It was decided that the matter would be discussed by the three Foreign Ministers when they met in London.<sup>3</sup>

### THE U.S.S.R. AND THE JAPANESE AGGRESSORS

The United States Government considered some definite agreement at Yalta regarding the U.S.S.R.'s entry into the war against the Japanese aggressors to be one of its top priorities. As early as the autumn of 1944 the U.S. military authorities began to display increasing interest in reaching agreement about specific ways of cooperation with the U.S.S.R. in the war against Japan.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, p. 270 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 217, 282.

The question of the U.S.S.R. joining the war against the Japanese aggressors was discussed on October 15, 1944, during Stalin's meeting with Churchill in Moscow. Present also were Harriman and Deane. General Deane said the U.S. Chiefs of Staff expressed the hope the Soviet Union would enter into the war against Japan at the earliest possible opportunity after the defeat of Germany. Stalin said that the Soviet Union would be ready to join in crushing the Japanese aggressors two or three months after the fall of Germany. He expressed the conviction that it would lead up to the early termination of the war in the Far East.<sup>1</sup>

Negotiations on the subject were continued during Stalin's meeting with Harriman on December 14. They discussed the political conditions for the U.S.S.R.'s entry in the war in the Far East.<sup>2</sup>

There was yet another factor that the United States was considering as it looked forward to the defeat of Japan. That was the atomic bomb. Not long before the Crimea Conference, Roosevelt had been told that the first atomic bomb would be ready by about August 1, 1945. It would be capable of wrecking a large city. The second bomb would be ready by the end of 1945.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of the fundamental importance which the United States attached to the atomic bomb, Washington still proceeded from the assumption that one or several atomic bombs would not be particularly instrumental in routing Japan. Therefore, the U.S. President and the American military establishment still considered it to be highly desirable for the U.S.S.R. to enter the war in the Far East. That was unequivocally stated in the Memorandum of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff to Roosevelt on January 23, 1945.<sup>4</sup>

That was also the consideration which the U.S. and British Chiefs of Staff guided themselves by during their meetings in Yalta parallel with the negotiations of the Heads of Government of the Three Powers. They pointed out that it might take a further eighteen months after the end of the war in Europe to put Japan to rout.<sup>5</sup> The American milita-

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, p. 369.

<sup>2</sup> *Soviet-American Relations... Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 339-340 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, p. 383.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 396.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 830.

ry establishment believed that if the U.S.S.R. entered the war in the Far East before an American invasion of Japan, that could save the lives of hundreds of thousands of American soldiers and, in fact, there might even be no need for it at all. If the invasion still had to be carried out, it might be expected to cost the U.S. over a million casualties. It was considered to be extremely important furthermore, for success of the operation, that the Soviet forces, on pinning down the Japanese units on the Asian Continent, should bar the Japanese Government from shipping them back to Japan.<sup>1</sup>

American military leaders were not sure that the war would end even when the U.S. gained control of the territory of Japan proper. They feared that even after that, the numerous and well-equipped Kwantung Army, that is, the Japanese forces in Manchuria, would be able to continue to fight and might attempt "to set up a new Japanese State". General Deane wrote that "victory would not be complete while this Army was still in existence".<sup>2</sup>

As Stettinius noted in his memoirs, American military leaders were exercising tremendous pressure on the President to get him to bring the U.S.S.R. into the war against Japan.

The Soviet Union's participation in the defeat of the Japanese aggressors came up for discussion during Stalin's meeting with Roosevelt on February 8, 1945. Stating his position with regard to these political problems, the U.S. President said that the southern half of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands would be turned over to the Soviet Union. Dairen, lying at the end of the South-Manchurian Railway, could be made a free port or leased out to the U.S.S.R. It could be possible to agree on the Chinese Eastern Railroad being used in the interest of the U.S.S.R. The status quo in Outer Mongolia was to be preserved.<sup>3</sup>

Churchill also considered that everything Japan had seized from Russia during the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 should be returned to her.<sup>4</sup>

The political conditions for the Soviet Union's entry into

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<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, Vol. 2, p. 585; H. L. Stimson and M. Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, New York, 1947, pp. 618-619.

<sup>2</sup> John R. Deane, *The Strange Alliance*, p. 225.

<sup>3</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, p. 140 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, p. 341.



the war against the Japanese aggressors were finally agreed during another meeting between Stalin and Roosevelt two days later.

On the closing day of the Conference of the Heads of Government of the Three Allied Powers on February 11, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill signed an Agreement providing for the Soviet Union to enter into the war against Japan on the side of the Allies two or three months after Germany had surrendered and the war in Europe had terminated, on condition that:

1. The status quo in Outer Mongolia (the Mongolian People's Republic) shall be preserved.

2. The former rights of Russia violated by the treacherous attack of Japan in 1904 shall be restored, viz.

(a) the southern part of Sakhalin as well as all the islands adjacent to it shall be returned to the Soviet Union;

(b) the commercial port of Dairen shall be internationalised, the pre-eminent interests of the Soviet Union in this port being safeguarded and the lease of Port Arthur as a naval base of the U.S.S.R. restored;

(c) the Chinese-Eastern Railroad and the South-Manchurian Railroad which provides an outlet to Dairen shall be jointly operated by the establishment of a joint Soviet-Chinese Company, it being understood that China shall retain full sovereignty in Manchuria.

3. The Kuril Islands shall be handed over to the Soviet Union.

The U.S. President undertook to reach agreement on those issues with the Government of China. The Soviet representatives expressed their readiness to conclude a pact of friendship and alliance with China to help it militarily "cast off the Japanese yoke".<sup>1</sup>

Roosevelt was most pleased with the Agreement about Soviet participation in the defeat of the Japanese aggressors. Stettinius noted in his memoirs that it "speeded up the end of the war and greatly reduced American casualties".<sup>2</sup>

During the years of the Cold War, the opponents of Roosevelt's policy in the United States began to criticise him for having made excessive concessions to the Soviet Union at the Crimea Conference regarding the conditions for its participation in the war in the Far East. Those critics pass

<sup>1</sup> *The Crimea Conference*, pp. 273-274 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Edward R. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians. The Yalta Conference*, p. 306.

over how much the U.S. needed Soviet help in that region. Furthermore, they pass over another object behind it; that of eliminating the aftermath of Japan's perfidious attack on Russia in 1904, that is, restoring the legitimate historical rights of the U.S.S.R. Official American historian Forrest C. Pogue points out that "in view of the additional aid the Allies needed in Europe and the Pacific ... one must conclude that the Far Eastern concessions at Yalta did not seem excessive in February 1945", for they had been prompted by the actual state of things in the region at the time.<sup>1</sup>

With the agreed documents signed, the Crimea Conference was over.

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The Crimea Conference took place at a time when the Soviet armies, mounting a sweeping offensive all along the Soviet-German front, and overcoming the fierce resistance of the major German forces, were close to Berlin already. That created favourable conditions for Soviet diplomatic activity.

In view of having to resolve the problems of the post-war peace structure, the ruling elements of Britain and the U.S. had perforce to reckon with the changed alignment of forces in Europe. The international position of the U.S.S.R. had been strengthened, and the Soviet Union's prestige in the world was extremely high. Deep-going revolutionary processes were underway in a number of countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, where people's democratic systems emerged and became consolidated. In that context, reactionary anti-Soviet forces moved into higher gear in Britain and the United States. But the war continued, and both the British and the United States Governments realised that it was impossible to win it without the Soviet Union's participation. So their representatives at the Conference, while striving to achieve their ends, did not, however, find it possible to allow the Alliance to break up and showed themselves keen on hammering out agreed compromise solutions to controversial issues.

The Crimea Conference and the decisions it adopted were of tremendous importance for hastening the end of the war

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<sup>1</sup> *Major Problems in American Foreign Policy, Documents and Essays*, Ed. by Thomas G. Paterson, D. C. Heath and Co., Lexington, Massachusetts, Toronto, 1978, Vol. 2, pp. 234, 236.

both in Europe and in the Far East. The measures it produced to coordinate the action of the Armed Forces of the Three Powers brought nearer the defeat of the German and Japanese aggressors.

The Conference laid the groundwork for resolving a number of major problems of post-war peace settlement and, above all, those of the treatment of Germany after her defeat.

The declaration known as Unity for Peace as for War, adopted at the Conference, was one of fundamental importance. The Heads of the Three Allied Powers declared in it: "Our meeting here in the Crimea has reaffirmed our common determination to maintain and strengthen in the peace to come that unity of purpose and of action which has made victory possible and certain for the United Nations in this war."<sup>1</sup>

On that issue, Stalin declared during an unofficial meeting of the Heads of the Three Governments that it was not so difficult to keep unity in time of war since there was a joint aim to defeat the common enemy, which was clear to everyone. The more difficult task would arise after the war when diverse interests tended to divide the Allies. He said he was confident that the present Alliance would meet this test also. Our duty, Stalin said, was to see that it would, and that our relations in peace-time should be as close as they had been in war.

Taking into account the relation of forces in Europe, as it had by then shaped up, the Governments of Great Britain and the United States had to put up with the fact that they were not in a position to force the Soviet Government into accepting solutions to the Polish question which they would have liked but which would have been contrary to the interests of the U.S.S.R.

At the same time, one should note that while seeking concerted solutions, the Soviet Government showed itself to be ready to accept certain compromise arrangements with regard to many aspects of the problems the Conference looked into. That was stated by Hopkins while the Conference was still going on.<sup>2</sup> Disputing with those who accused Roosevelt of having made excessive concessions at the Crimea Conference, Stettinius referred in his memoirs to a list of 12 vital concessions made by the Soviet delegation at the Confer-

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, p. 975.

<sup>2</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 861-862.

ence. He pointed out that the readiness of the Soviet representatives to make certain concessions was due to the fact that they were "primarily interested in an alliance of Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union".<sup>1</sup>

Bourgeois writers also note the efforts the Soviet delegation made with a view to cooperation and coordinated decision-making at the Conference. American historian Diane S. Clemens, while thoroughly analysing the position of each delegation on basic issues in dispute, arrived at the conclusion that the decisions at Yalta involved compromise by each nation, "probably, more by the Soviets than by the Western nations".<sup>2</sup>

Many comments by Roosevelt as well as by other members of the American delegation after the Conference indicate that they were quite pleased with its outcome. The U.S. President, while setting out for the Conference, attached particular importance to settling the issues of creating an international security organisation and achieving definite agreement about the Soviet Union's entry into the war against Japan. When both of those issues had been settled, Roosevelt found his objective at the Conference to have been achieved. Robert Sherwood says on the subject: "The mood of the American delegates, including Roosevelt and Hopkins, could be described as one of supreme exultation as they left Yalta... And the immediate response of the principal spokesmen for British and American public opinion added immeasurably to their sense of satisfaction with the job that had been done."<sup>3</sup>

Speaking in Congress on his return from the Conference, the U.S. President expressed his satisfaction with the decisions it had adopted. With a sense of realism that was typical of him, he recognised the necessity of cooperation with the U.S.S.R.<sup>4</sup> Churchill, in his messages to the War Cabinet, also quite positively appraised the results of the Conference. But his report to a War Cabinet on his return to London was more circumstantial. He pointed out the immense success of the Soviet forces in having covered the distance between the Vistula and the Oder in the space of three weeks

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<sup>1</sup> Edward R. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians. The Yalta Conference*, pp. 295-303.

<sup>2</sup> Diane Shaver Clemens, *Yalta*, pp. 288, 290.

<sup>3</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 869, 870.

<sup>4</sup> *Congressional Record*, 79th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 91, Part 2, p. 1621.

only, liberating almost the whole of Poland. Under those circumstances, the decisions taken at the Conference in respect of the Polish question, he said, were optimal. The Premier declared that he was quite satisfied with the decisions taken on the other questions. He pointed out, furthermore, that it was quite obvious at the Conference that the Russians wanted to work in concert with the British and the Americans. They were ready to meet the U.S. President half-way on issues he attached the greatest importance to. Churchill also stated that the Russians had created most propitious conditions for the talks. The British War Cabinet found the results of the Conference to be highly satisfactory.

The results of the Crimea Conference fetched a spate of comments from the Soviet, British and U.S. press. The positive evaluation of the results of the Conference by all the three parties to it indicated that its decisions were well balanced and profitable for all of them.

The successful completion of the Conference meant dashing Germany's and Japan's hopes for a break-up of the Three-Power Alliance as the last-ditch opportunity to avoid defeat in the war.

On a number of essential problems, the positions of the representatives of the U.S.S.R., the United States and the United Kingdom coincided or slightly diverged so that to bridge the gap was not particularly difficult. Yet there had been fairly heated debate between the conferees on some issues. But on most of these, too, concerted decisions had been worked out, largely due to the Soviet delegation. True, the representatives of the United States and Great Britain, believing it necessary to preserve Three-Power unity, showed a certain measure of readiness for cooperation. The Crimea Conference has gone down in history as the culminating point of the cooperation of the Three Allied Powers in the war.

## Chapter VII

### VICTORY OVER GERMANY

#### THE END OF THE WAR IN EUROPE

The offensive of the Soviet forces which began in mid-January, 1945, all along the Soviet-German front, was successfully developing. The German troops in East Prussia were cut off and smashed. The Polish lands adjacent to the Baltic Sea were liberated by early April, which meant that virtually the whole territory of Poland was free. The German troops were put to rout in Silesia at the same time, so Germany lost that major military-industrial region. On April 4, the Soviet armies completed the liberation of Hungary. Soviet forces were pressing forward also in Czechoslovakia and Austria. They captured Vienna on April 13.

Churchill wrote to the head of the Soviet Government that the action of the Soviet forces earned "unstinted applause" and future generations would acknowledge their debt to them "as unreservedly as do we who have lived to witness these proud achievements".<sup>1</sup>

Offensive operations of the Western Allies were resumed in February. They had advanced to the Rhine all along its length, actually coming up against no German resistance. An average of ten thousand German soldiers and officers surrendered on the Western front every day.<sup>2</sup> On March 24, the forces of the Western Allies went over to the offensive again. They had made long and thorough preparations but, as General Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe, admitted, had not encountered any serious resistance during the crossing of the Rhine north of the Ruhr. The two American divisions making the assault suffered a total of only thirty-one casualties.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, pp. 305-306.

<sup>2</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, Garden City Books, New York, 1948, p. 389.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

In a message to Stalin on March 28, Eisenhower said that his immediate plan was to encircle and smash the enemy forces defending the Ruhr. He said that would be done in late April or even earlier. "My next task," he wrote, "will be to divide the enemy's remaining forces by joining hands with your forces." Eisenhower wrote that the best axis on which to effect this junction would be Erfurt-Leipzig-Dresden.<sup>1</sup> The object behind the advance in that direction was to cut Germany in half and so drastically reduce her capacity for further resistance.

The Soviet side replied to Eisenhower that it entirely approved of his plan.

The plans for subsequent operations, worked out by Eisenhower, evoked Churchill's vehement objections. He dreamed of Anglo-American forces, not Soviet, taking Berlin. On April 1, Churchill pointed out in a cable to Roosevelt that if the Russians took Berlin, they might get the impression that they had made the overwhelming contribution towards our common victory. "I therefore consider that from a political standpoint we should march as far east into Germany as possible, and that should Berlin be in our grasp we should certainly take it."<sup>2</sup> The British Premier sent a similar cable to Eisenhower, stressing the political aspects of his proposals.<sup>3</sup>

The front in North Italy continued to exist, too, but the troops of the Western Allies were inactive there in the opening months of 1945. In the diplomatic sense, however, there was quite a storm over the events in that region.

The fascist ringleaders understood perfectly well that they had lost the war. But they still looked for salvation. They were now pinning all their hopes on the break-up of the coalition of the U.S.S.R., the U.S., and Great Britain. And they were doing all they could to bring that about. They were contemplating an armistice with the Western Powers so as to set up a common front with them against the Soviet forces.

The increasingly anti-Soviet designs of Churchill showed how dangerous those plans were. Finding that Germany no longer posed a threat to the British Empire, Churchill

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<sup>1</sup> *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower. The War Years*, The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore and London, 1970, p. 2551.

<sup>2</sup> *Roosevelt and Churchill. Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, p. 669.

<sup>3</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, p. 409.

turned the belligerent anti-Communist he had been. Once more, the Soviet Union was his enemy No. 1. Subsequently, Churchill admitted that he had instructed Field Marshal Montgomery in late April "*to be careful in collecting the German arms, to stack them so that they could easily be issued again to the German soldiers*", if London deemed that necessary.<sup>1</sup>

The destruction of Germany's military power, Churchill wrote in his memoirs, "had brought with it a fundamental change in the relations between Communist Russia and the Western democracies. They had lost their common enemy, which was almost their sole bond of union". Outlining his strategy and policy plans in the years ahead, Churchill said that a new front must be immediately created against the Soviet forces' onward sweep; that front had to be as far east as possible; Berlin was the prime and true objective of the Anglo-American armies; that the liberation of Czechoslovakia by American troops and their entry into Prague was a high consequence; and that a settlement must be reached on all major issues between the West and the East in Europe before the Western Allies "yielded any part of the German territories they had conquered".<sup>2</sup>

It was quite understandable that British and American governing quarters were inclined to respond to German feelers. That was the essence of the negotiations in Switzerland between the chief of the American Intelligence service in Europe, Allen W. Dulles, and the representative of the German High Command in Italy, S. S. General Wolff, about German surrender on the Italian front.

On learning from the British and Americans about the projected negotiations, the Soviet Government said that it had no objection provided Soviet representatives were invited to join them. That suggestion was declined, and the Soviet Government had to insist on the negotiations being discontinued.<sup>3</sup>

Stalin sent a number of rather strong-worded messages to Churchill and Roosevelt. He pointed out that the way things were shaping up could help towards preserving and strengthening confidence between the Three Powers. Stalin said he

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<sup>1</sup> *The Daily Herald*, November 24, 1954. (Emphasis added. — V.S.)

<sup>2</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, p. 400.

<sup>3</sup> *Correspondence...* Vol. I, pp. 397-398, *FRUS*, 1945, Vol. 3. *European Advisory Commission: Austria, Germany, United States Government Printing Office*, Washington, 1968, pp. 723, 725, 731.



believed that in a situation where the enemy was faced with inevitable surrender, whenever the representatives of one of the Allies met the Germans to discuss surrender terms, "the representatives of the other Ally should be enabled to take part in the meeting. That would preclude mutual suspicions and give the enemy no chance to sow distrust among the Allies."<sup>1</sup>

Roosevelt assured Stalin of his "truthfulness and reliability".<sup>2</sup> American representatives maintained that the only contact they had so far established with the Germans was with a view to reaching agreement with them about the opening of negotiations. But it can be seen from subsequent research studies drawing upon the American record files concerned that negotiations were already going on in Bern. The Germans wanted an armistice in Italy so that they could move their troops to the Eastern front.<sup>3</sup>

Churchill, however, with an air of injured innocence because of Stalin's message, kept silent as a matter of fact, which by itself could not but arouse the Soviet Government's suspicions. Those suspicions were amply justified. One could see that quite clearly from the British Premier's above-quoted strategic and policy plans for the future. Eisenhower also believed that the Anglo-American High Command had the right to accept the unconditional surrender of any body of German troops, up to an entire army, without asking anybody's opinion. The Anglo-American forces would have used that opportunity "to advance through these surrendered troops as far as possible to the East"<sup>4</sup>. But after Stalin's message Churchill, too, pointed out now, in his letter of March 25 to Eden, that in the event of negotiations about a German surrender on the Western front, "the Russians should be in from the start."<sup>5</sup>

Stalin's rather strong-worded messages had their effect. Furthermore, they proved to be well-timed because the Nazis made desperate attempts shortly afterwards to surrender in the West while fighting on in the East.

However, that did not mean that Churchill and the British ruling establishment had relinquished their anti-Soviet

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. II, p. 206; Vol. I, pp. 317-318.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 207.

<sup>3</sup> Bradley F. Smith and Elena Agarossi, *Operation Sunrise. The Secret Surrender*, Basic Books, New York, 1979.

<sup>4</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, p. 389.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 391.

plans. As John Ehrman pointed out, "the Western Allies ... wished to conquer Germany as fast as possible so as the better to negotiate with Russia *from strength*".<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt's position on the subject coincided, in principle, with Churchill's. In a message of April 5 to the British Premier, Roosevelt expressed the conviction that the Anglo-American armies would in a very few days be in a position that would permit the Governments of the two Powers to become "*tougher*" in negotiations with the Soviet Government.<sup>2</sup>

A very powerful Soviet force had been set up on the Oder and West Neisse line by mid-April for a crushing blow at the enemy Berlin group. It had 2.5 million officers and men, 41,600 guns and mortars, 6,250 tanks and self-propelled guns, and 7,500 combat aircraft.<sup>3</sup>

On April 16, the Soviet forces launched a major offensive in the direction of Berlin. That was the starting point of the historic Berlin operation. Within a few days, the Soviet forces broke through the strong enemy defences and advanced rapidly towards Berlin, outflanking it from the south and the north. They closed in around Berlin on April 25. In those very days the Soviet-American link-up took place at Torgau on the Elbe, cutting Germany in half. Her days were numbered.

In the meantime, the Nazi chiefs were making further attempts to come to terms with the British and the Americans about their surrender in the West, trying to strike a deal with them so as to stop the advance of the Soviet forces. One of those attempts was made by Himmler through the Swedish Government.

Having lost all hope, Hitler committed suicide on April 30. The Fuehrer's body was taken out into the Reichschancellory's backyard, poured over with petrol and burnt. "Hitler's funeral pyre, with the din of the Russian guns growing ever louder," Churchill wrote, "made a lurid end to the Third Reich."<sup>4</sup>

The Soviet flag was already fluttering over the Reichstag on May 1, and on May 2, the Soviet forces gained control of the whole of Berlin.

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<sup>1</sup> John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. VI, p. 150. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>2</sup> *Roosevelt and Churchill. Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, p. 705. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 10, p. 315 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, p. 464.

Admiral Doenitz, whom Hitler, before his death, had appointed his successor, renewed attempts to come to agreement with the British and the Americans about a surrender in the West, while declaring that he was determined "to continue the struggle against the Bolsheviks".<sup>1</sup> He tried to have the German forces surrender unit by unit, in individual areas. The Nazis and the brass that had perpetrated monstrous atrocities on the territories of the U.S.S.R., Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia were now trying to escape responsibility and save their skins by giving themselves up to the American and the British forces. Doenitz' representatives signed the instrument of surrender of the German forces in North-Western Germany on May 4, and that of German forces in Bavaria and Western Austria on the following day. But when the German representatives arrived at Eisenhower's headquarters in Rheims for the surrender of the forces of the southern region, he demanded the general unconditional surrender of all the German forces on all the fronts.

The Act of Military Surrender was signed by General Jodl on behalf of the German High Command at Eisenhower's headquarters in Rheims at 2.41 a.m. on May 7.

The document referred to the unconditional surrender of the German forces to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, and simultaneously to the Soviet Supreme High Command. Active operations were to cease at 23.01 hours Central European time on 8 May. It was specified that the Act which had been signed would be superseded by a general instrument of surrender of Germany and her armed forces.<sup>2</sup>

The European Advisory Commission had carried out a large amount of work to draft the instrument of Germany's unconditional surrender. Bedell Smith also had the EAC-approved text but he "forgot" about that document when the act of surrender was being signed at Rheims.<sup>3</sup>

Considering the immense political importance of the surrender of the Nazi aspirants to world supremacy, it was a

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Diplomacy*, Vol. 4, p. 629 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Forrest S. Pogue, *United States Army in World War II. The European Theatre of Operations*, The Supreme Command Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., 1954, p. 488.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, New York, 1964, p. 241.

matter of paramount importance that this historic act should be performed in the capital of Germany.

The official signing of the Act of Unconditional Surrender of the German Armed Forces took place at Karlshorst, a Berlin suburb, at 00 hours 43 min. on May 9. The first paragraph of that document reads:

We, the undersigned, acting by authority of the German Supreme Command, hereby surrender unconditionally all our armed forces on land, sea and in the air as well as of all the forces presently under German command to the Supreme High Command of the Red Army and simultaneously to the Supreme Command of the Allied Expeditionary Force.

The Act of Surrender was signed on behalf of the Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht by Fieldmarshal Keitel, Supreme Commander of the German Navy Fleet Admiral Friedeburg and Colonel-General of the Air Force Stumpff.

The Act was also signed by Marshal Georgy Zhukov, on behalf of the Red Army Supreme Command, and by Air Chief Marshal of the RAF Sir Arthur William Tedder (Eisenhower's Deputy) and also by General Spaatz, Commander of the U.S. Strategic Air Force, and General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, Commander-in-Chief of the French Army.<sup>1</sup>

That the Soviet Union had made the decisive contribution towards the defeat of Nazi Germany was widely recognised all over the world. Messages of congratulation were coming to Moscow in an endless stream from all over the world. President Truman said in his message: "We fully appreciate the magnificent contribution made by the mighty Soviet Union to the cause of civilization and liberty. You have demonstrated the ability of a freedom-loving and supremely courageous people to crush the evil forces of barbarism, however powerful."<sup>2</sup>

Of course, Great Britain and the United States of America also did much to bring about the defeat of Nazi Germany. This has been acknowledged in all Soviet historical publications.

Yet one cannot accept the argument widespread in the West that the U.S. was the arsenal of victory and thus had played the main role in the victorious ending of the war

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 3, pp. 261-262 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence...* Vol. II, pp. 230-231.

with Germany, any more than one can overestimate the importance of American Lend-Lease supplies to the Soviet Union.

In this context, it is necessary to underline, first, that the Soviet forces stopped the German war machine and started to turn the tide of the war at the end of 1941 by the victory in the Battle of Moscow, that is, before any Lend-Lease supplies first reached the Soviet Union. Second, supplies from the United States, Britain and Canada came mostly in 1943 to 1945, that is at a time when the Soviet Union was itself already producing, as I said, appreciably more of military equipment than Germany did. Third, supplies from the U.S. and Britain constituted only a fraction of the military equipment manufactured at Soviet plants and factories: 2 per cent of the artillery, 10 per cent of the tanks and 12 per cent of the aircraft.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, those supplies could not play a decisive role in the developments on the Soviet-German front.

It was by Soviet arms, first and foremost, that the German troops were crushed on the Soviet-German front. Western supplies could not essentially influence the progress of hostilities on that major battlefield of the Second World War. Yet they played a certain positive role, no doubt. For example, the Soviet Union received 375,000 trucks which helped establish a system of motor transport for the Soviet forces. Among other important items supplied mention should be made of metal-cutting machine-tools (44,600), locomotives, communications facilities, non-ferrous metals, fuel.<sup>2</sup>

The Act signed in Berlin referred to the surrender of the German Armed Forces. But it was not only the Nazi forces that surrendered. It was all of Germany as a State that did so. A Declaration Regarding the Defeat of Germany and the Assumption of Supreme Authority by the Governments of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain, the United States and France was published in Berlin on June 5.

The Declaration opened by stating that the German Armed Forces had sustained total defeat and surrendered and that "*Germany ... bears responsibility for the war*". It pointed out that Germany had no central Government and that the

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Soviet Socialist Economy*, Moscow, 1978, Vol. 5, p. 546 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 540, 546 (in Russian).

Governments of the Four Allied Powers "assume supreme authority with respect to Germany". They would take such steps as they "deem requisite for future peace and security". All armed forces of Germany, the S.S., S.A. and Gestapo were to be completely disarmed. The Four Powers declared that additional political, administrative, economic, financial, military and other demands would likewise be presented. The population of Germany was to submit to all the orders and ordinances of the Four Powers. The Declaration was signed, on behalf of their respective Governments, by Zhukov, Eisenhower, Montgomery and de Lattre de Tassigny.<sup>1</sup> The text of the agreements concluded between the Governments of the Allied Powers about the control machinery for Germany and the zones of occupation, which were signed in September to November 1944, was also published.

The Four-Power occupation machinery in Germany was thus set up and began to function shortly afterwards.

#### TRUMAN TOUGH ON THE U.S.S.R.

The post-war problems were of increasing relevance as the end of the war drew nearer. The establishment of an international security organisation was prominent among them. The Soviet Government strove for that organisation to be capable of averting the outbreak of another world war and of ensuring peace and international security.

Meanwhile, Franklin D. Roosevelt died on April 12, and Harry Truman became President. It was necessary to make out, through direct contact with Truman, what line he proposed to follow in respect of the U.S.S.R., all the more so since there were quite a few signs across the Atlantic to indicate an incipient marked deterioration of relations with the U.S.S.R., above all on the Polish question.

U.S. Ambassador Harriman called on Stalin on April 13 to assure him that Truman would carry on the late President's policy. It would be good if Molotov arrived in the U.S. which would prove the Soviet Government's commitment to cooperation with the United States under the new President as well. The People's Commissar, he said, could visit

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 3, pp. 273-281—in Russian. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

Washington and meet Truman before going to the San Francisco Conference.<sup>1</sup> Then came the official invitation for the People's Commissar to come to the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet delegation to the San Francisco Conference for the establishment of the United Nations Organisation was formed in mid-April. It was led by Vyacheslav Molotov.<sup>3</sup>

Upon his arrival in Washington on April 22, Molotov saw the new U.S. President and had a brief talk with him. Truman said he had the "greatest admiration" for the Soviet Union and hoped that the relations which had been established between the two countries would be maintained.<sup>4</sup>

On April 23, Truman conferred with Stettinius, U.S. military leaders and Harriman. Stettinius informed them that he had already talked the Polish question over with Molotov, but the negotiations ended up in a "complete deadlock".

Before hearing the views of his advisers, that is, as a matter of fact, disregarding their opinion and not even allowing them to state it in all frankness, Truman claimed that "agreements with the Soviet Union so far had been a one-way street" and "that could not continue; it was now or never". He emphasised that he intended to stick to his plans for San Francisco. "*If the Russians did not wish to join us they could go to hell,*" Truman declared.<sup>5</sup>

So what did the President's advisers say upon that kind of opening?

The first to speak was Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson. He had also been infinitely hostile towards the Soviet Union in the pre-war years. Now, however, Stimson admitted, contrary even to the President's opinion, that "in the big military matters, the Soviet Government had kept their word and that the military authorities of the United States had come to count on it... In fact they had often been better than their promise." Stimson warned that without fully understanding how much the Polish question meant for the security of the U.S.S.R., the United States "might be heading into very dangerous waters".

James V. Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy, was of a dif-

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. 1945*, Vol. 5, pp. 827-828.

<sup>2</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 3, p. 186 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 189.

<sup>4</sup> *FRUS. 1945*, Vol. 5, p. 235.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 253. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

ferent opinion. He said that if the Russians were to be rigid in their attitude, "we had better have a showdown with them now than later".

Other opinions also differed. Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy went along with Stimson. He said he felt that it was a serious matter to break with the Russians. General Marshall said the United States hoped for Soviet participation in the war against Japan at a time when it would be useful for the U.S. The Russians had it within their power to delay their entry into the Far Eastern war until the Americans had done all the "dirty work".

The last to speak was General Deane, the head of the American Military Mission in Moscow, who said that the U.S. "should be firm" in dealing with the U.S.S.R.<sup>1</sup>

In a conversation with Molotov straight afterwards (with Stettinius and Gromyko present), Truman claimed, in harsh terms, twisting the facts, that the Soviet Government was violating the decisions of the Yalta Conference regarding the Polish Government. While Roosevelt, to achieve his object, had promised big loans to the Soviet Union for rebuilding its war-damaged national economy, Truman opposed that effort. The U.S. President contended that the economic cooperation of the two nations would prove impossible. Truman thought that he would obtain from the Soviet Union what even Roosevelt and Churchill had failed to obtain from it, that is, the "consent" to the restoration of a reactionary Poland, hostile to it, on its Western border. Truman *emphatically demanded the adoption* of the proposals on the Polish question which had been set out in his and the British Premier's joint message of April 18, 1945, to the head of the Soviet Government.<sup>2</sup>

Stating the position of the U.S.S.R., Vyacheslav Molotov, Vice-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, declared that the Soviet Government was as desirous as ever of cooperation with the United States and Great Britain. But he noted that the three Governments had so far acted as equals and had not attempted, either each on its own or the two together, to impose their will on the other. That was the fundamental principle of cooperation, the only one acceptable to the Soviet Government.

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. 1945*, Vol. 5, pp. 252-255.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



Replying to Truman's further attacks on the Crimea decisions regarding Poland, the Soviet representative emphasised that his Government supported the Crimea decisions and then said that the Soviet Government could not agree that an abrogation of those decisions by others should be considered as a violation by the Soviet Government.<sup>1</sup>

Although Harriman did support, if with some reserve, the President and others favouring a "tough line" with regard to the U.S.S.R. at the above-mentioned meeting, he wrote about that conversation in his memoirs: "I was a little taken aback, frankly, when the President attacked Molotov so vigorously... I regret that Truman went at it so hard because that gave Molotov the reason to tell Stalin that *the Roosevelt policy was being abandoned*."<sup>2</sup>

Truman's outburst proved to be futile. As you will see below, he was soon to realise that relations with the U.S.S.R. would have to be built on a different basis. Nor could he, in fact, impose his own terms on the Soviet delegation at San Francisco. He had, willy-nilly, to agree to get down to working out mutually acceptable solutions.

Truman's "trial of strength" marked that very complex situation in which the United Nations Organisation came to be created.

American historian D.F. Fleming points out that there were some who thought the Cold War did not begin until around 1947, but it was clear from these facts "that President Truman was ready to begin it before he had been in office two weeks".<sup>3</sup> He describes Truman as a belligerent-minded President.

Truman's position was quite in accord with the U.S. ruling establishment's line of seeking world supremacy. Summing it up, the *New York Times* managing director Neil MacNeill wrote that "both the United States and the world need peace based on American principles—a Pax Americana". "We should insist on an American peace," he said. "We should accept nothing less."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 256-258.

<sup>2</sup> W. A. Harriman and E. Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin. 1941-1946*, pp. 453-454. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>3</sup> D. F. Fleming, *The Cold War and Its Origins. 1917-1960*, Vol. I, 1917-1950, p. 268.

<sup>4</sup> Neil MacNeill, *An American Peace*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1944, p. 264.

## **SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE. U.N. CHARTER DRAFTED**

The Conference that was to produce the Charter of the international security organisation, named the United Nations Organisation, was officially opened in San Francisco on April 25.

Invitations to the Conference had been sent out on behalf of the Four Powers—the U.S.S.R., the United States, Great Britain and China. They were addressed to the Governments of all the nations which had signed the United Nations Declaration early in January 1942. The countries which had subsequently subscribed to it and declared war on Germany and Japan were also invited.

In its opening days, the Conference considered inviting some other countries. The Ukrainian and Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republics were included in the list of U.N. founder members following the proposal from the Soviet Government. Their delegations arrived to attend the Conference.

Heated discussion between the Governments of the U.S.S.R., on the one hand, and the United States and Great Britain, on the other hand, erupted over the issue of Poland's participation in the Conference. The Soviet Government pressed hard for representatives of the Provisional Government of Poland to be invited. Yet the U.S. and Britain did not agree to that. So Poland was kept out, though she was subsequently granted the right to sign the U.N. Charter as a founder member.

The U.S. and Britain barred Albania and the Mongolian People's Republic from attending the Conference on the grounds that they had not recognised their Governments.

The States which had fought against the United Nations were not allowed to attend the Conference. Neither were those which had declared themselves neutral in the war (like Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland).

The Conference was attended by 50 nations. The overwhelming majority were capitalist States. Many of them were obediently following in the wake of Washington's and London's policies. There were mounting anti-Soviet feelings in U.S. ruling circles. Some members of the U.S. delegation (A. Wandenbergh and John Foster Dulles) sought to disrupt a cooperation with the U.S.S.R. and have the U.S. tell its bidding to the Conference in disregard of the position of

the Soviet Government. U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union W. Averell Harriman, who also attended the Conference, joined the "hard-liners". Therefore, the Soviet delegation had to uphold its position at the Conference in what was an extremely complicated situation.

Speaking at the first plenary session, on April 26, Molotov emphasised that "the Soviet Government is a sincere and firm champion of the establishment of a strong international organisation of security". He pointed out the role of the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition in the defeat of Nazi Germany which had tried to impose her domination in Europe and "to pave the way to the world domination by German imperialism". The People's Commissar referred to the significance of coordinated action by the leading Powers of that coalition in the post-war period. At the same time, he noted the role which other nations attending the Conference might play in the creation of the United Nations.<sup>1</sup>

The Conference opened a few days before Nazi Germany was totally defeated. Soviet troops had already closed in on Berlin. The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs had every reason to state in his speech that the Soviet Union had saved European civilisation in bloody battles with German fascism.<sup>2</sup>

Deliberations at the Conference in San Francisco were based on the proposals agreed upon by the Three Powers at Dumbarton Oaks and Yalta. But at the Conference quite a few amendments were submitted, many running counter to the joint proposals of the Three Powers. Furthermore, some of them were virtually backed (or even masterminded) by the Governments of the United States and Britain.

One factor under the circumstances, largely instrumental in making the Conference a success, was that the delegations of the U.S.S.R., the U.S., Great Britain and China had agreed to concert their proposals and their positions with regard to the proposals of other countries.

The most substantive debate arose over the functions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The delegations of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and some other

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<sup>1</sup> *The Soviet Union at International Conferences of the Period of the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. 5, *Conference of the United Nations in San Francisco, April 25-June 26, 1945, Collection of Documents* (hereinafter—*The Conference in San Francisco*), Moscow, 1980, pp. 120-124 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *The Conference in San Francisco*, p. 123 (in Russian).

countries were at pains to bring down the role of the Security Council in the U.N. which was to operate by the principle of unanimity of the five permanent members of the Council (the U.S.S.R., the U.S., Great Britain, China and France). They insisted on the General Assembly becoming the principal U.N. body to consider and resolve the problems of safeguarding peace and security.

The Soviet delegation (which had Andrei Gromyko as Chairman after Molotov's departure from San Francisco on May 10) had to make a great effort and exercise great restraint and perseverance to prevent an abandonment of the already concerted fundamentals of the U.N. Charter. The Soviet Government succeeded in securing the consensus of the Four Powers on the role of the General Assembly and the Security Council, and—at the cost of certain concessions—on the voting procedure in the Council. The proposals they framed were subsequently approved by the Conference.

The colonial question was one of the most acute issues under discussion in San Francisco. The Soviet delegation called for the U.N. Charter to stipulate that one of the basic objectives of the international trusteeship system instituted within the U.N. framework was to help the trust territories "toward self-government and self-determination, having the aim to expedite the achievement by them of full national independence".<sup>1</sup>

Great Britain and France—the major colonial Powers in the world—strongly opposed the inclusion of such provisions in the Charter. The U.S. Government now also began to press for the annexation of the Japanese trust territories it had seized. Members of the American delegation declared that on a number of territories, which were to be brought under the trusteeship system, the U.S. had built a large number of airfields and lines of communication and acquired certain commercial interests. The U.S. Government wanted to retain its full right to these acquisitions and would emphatically insist on it being stipulated in the chapter on territorial trusteeship.<sup>2</sup> That position of the U.S. ruling circles was connected with their plans for world domination.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Conference in San Francisco*, pp. 428-429.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 511.

<sup>3</sup> Several years later, the General of the U.S. Air Force Henry Arnold wrote about those plans, saying that "our next enemy would be Russia... We must have bases located around the world that we can

The Soviet delegation still had its proposals essentially prevail. The U.N. Charter had it written down that the trusteeship system must contribute towards the progressive development of the inhabitants of the trust territories "towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned".<sup>1</sup>

The Charter of the United Nations Organisation, finally agreed, was signed on the closing day of the Conference, June 26. The San Francisco Conference had thus successfully completed its mission.

The Charter laid down the following basic purposes and principles of the United Nations:

"To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace"; to bring about by peaceful means adjustment or settlement of international disputes; to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.<sup>2</sup>

The U.N. Charter conferred on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. All the members of the United Nations agreed to *accept and carry out its decisions*. Unanimity of the Permanent Members of the Council is required for decision-making on all except procedural matters. The General Assembly, consisting of all the United Nations Member-States, may discuss any questions within the scope of the Charter and make relevant *recommendations*.

Many other provisions of the U.N. Charter, which the Soviet Union had done much to work out, were also of essential significance

Since some in the Western countries subsequently began to express displeasure with the U.S.S.R. having the veto power in the Security Council, even Secretary of State Stettinius found it necessary to vindicate the truth. He pointed

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reach any target we may be called upon to hit". (Henry H. Arnold, *Global Mission*, Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, pp. 586-587.)

<sup>1</sup> *Charter of the United Nations*, Office of Public Information, United Nations, New York, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

out in his reminiscences that the U.S. delegation at Dumbarton Oaks and after favoured the Great-Power veto on matters involving economic and military sanctions.<sup>1</sup>

The Conference in San Francisco came to a successful conclusion, although it was certainly divided over some issues. But the United Nations' interest in continued cooperation provided the ground for overcoming those differences.

Speaking at the concluding session of the Conference, the head of the Soviet delegation, Andrei Gromyko, emphasised the importance of Great-Power cooperation both in defeating Germany and in preserving peace in the future.<sup>2</sup>

The establishment of the United Nations Organisation was an event of fundamental importance in the history of international relations.

### THE POLISH GOVERNMENTAL QUESTION SETTLED

Relations with the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe came to be increasingly prominent among the major issues of Soviet foreign policy. The defeat of the bulk of Nazi Germany's forces by the Soviet troops and the Soviet Union's liberating mission played the decisive role in the restoration of the national independence of those countries.

At the same time, the local bourgeoisie in the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe had its positions seriously weakened as most of it had betrayed its peoples and collaborated with the German invaders during the war. The struggle of the mass of the people under Communist leadership for national and social liberation acquired vast dimensions in those countries. The expulsion of German troops that were invaders in some countries (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Albania) or allies in other countries (Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary) was linked with the way they resolved the power issue. Those countries had people's democratic Governments springing up, with the Communists coming to play an ever greater role in them.

Those developments brought in their wake essential changes in relations between the U.S.S.R. and the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe. Quite a few problems

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<sup>1</sup> Edward R. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> *The Conference in San Francisco*, p. 285 (in Russian).

connected with those countries had also become negotiating topics and quite often the object of fairly heated debate between the Governments of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Great Britain.

The Polish question remained an extremely sensitive one in international affairs. The governing quarters of Great Britain, and also of the United States, particularly with Harry Truman as President of the United States, decided to give the Soviet Government battle over this issue once again, aiming to restore a reactionary order in Poland and convert her again into an outpost of the capitalist system in opposition to the U.S.S.R.

A Commission on the Polish Question, consisting of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. and the British and American Ambassadors in Moscow, established by the Crimea Conference, began to function in Moscow on February 23.

British Ambassador Sir Archibald Clark Kerr was instructed to make "the strongest possible stand from the outset".<sup>1</sup> In a message of March 13 to Roosevelt, Churchill insisted on "*combined dogged pressure*"<sup>2</sup> upon the U.S.S.R. so as to make it yield ground. He sought the U.S. President's consent to the dispatch of a joint message, couched in tough terms, to the head of the Soviet Government.<sup>3</sup>

However, Roosevelt did not find it possible to ignore the decisions of the Crimea Conference and to press again for the fulfilment of the demands which he and Churchill had relinquished. Roosevelt reminded Churchill on May 29 that they had made a compromise arrangement at Yalta and that it was impossible to recant it. Otherwise, they would expose themselves to the charge that they were attempting to go back on the Crimea decisions.<sup>4</sup>

Roosevelt did not agree either to join Churchill in sending a message to the head of the Soviet Government as he did not want to team up openly with one of the major Allies against the other one. He sent Stalin yet another message on the Polish question, but he did that on his own, without the British Premier's participation, and couched it in rather restrained

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<sup>1</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. III, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> *Roosevelt and Churchill. Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, p. 671. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 685.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 671.

terms. Roosevelt wanted to see the matter settled as soon as possible.<sup>1</sup>

Replying to him on April 7, Stalin wrote that the U.S. and British Ambassadors in Moscow had "departed from the instructions of the Crimea Conference" and tried to act contrary to them in their negotiations with the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. They ignored the existence of the Polish Provisional Government and demanded the invitation for consultation of Polish leaders who did not recognise the Crimea Conference decisions.<sup>2</sup>

Right after Truman's coming to office, relations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. sharply deteriorated, particularly over the Polish question. As early as April 14, that is, two days after Roosevelt's death, he offered to Churchill to send a joint message to Moscow.<sup>3</sup> In that message, received in Moscow on April 18, Truman and Churchill insisted on the former Anglo-American proposals unacceptable both to the Soviet Government and to the Polish Provisional Government.<sup>4</sup>

Negotiations between the Soviet Union and Poland to conclude a treaty of alliance had been going on for several months on Polish initiative. They were successfully concluded by mid-April. On April 16, the Soviet Government informed the Government of Great Britain and the United States, as its Allies in the war, about the forthcoming signing of the Treaty.<sup>5</sup>

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Stalin emphasised the great historic significance of the Treaty. He pointed out that Poland's pre-war rulers had not wanted to have any allied relationship with the U.S.S.R. In consequence, Poland was occupied and destroyed as an independent State. Furthermore, on account of that policy, the German forces gained an opportunity to advance as far as the outskirts of Moscow. Now, this old policy of Poland had been replaced by a policy of alliance and friendship between Poland and her Eastern neighbour. "The Treaty is a pledge of the independence of the new democratic Poland, a pledge of her power and of her prosperity," the head of the Soviet Govern-

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. II, pp. 201-204.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 212, 213.

<sup>3</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, pp. 424-425.

<sup>4</sup> *Correspondence...*, Vol. II, pp. 215-217.

<sup>5</sup> *Documents... Soviet-Polish Relations*, Vol. 8, p. 413 (in Russian).



ment declared. Its international significance resided in the fact that it meant setting up a united front of the two nations against German imperialism and curbing German aggression from the East.<sup>1</sup>

The head of the Polish Provisional Government, E. Osóbka-Morawski stressed the importance of the Treaty for the common security of the two countries. He stated that the cooperation of Poland and the U.S.S.R. was a historical imperative, but it had become possible "only now when the people in our country have got a voice of their own".<sup>2</sup>

The conclusion of the Treaty went far towards strengthening the international position of the newborn people's democratic Polish State. Its signing made it only too clear for the United States and Great Britain that their attempts at exporting counter-revolution to Poland were doomed to failure.

In the conversation with Molotov in Washington on April 23, mentioned earlier on, Truman tried again to secure the Soviet consent to a revision of the Crimea decisions. The British Premier also emphasised in his message to Eden (April 24) that a settlement with the Russians "can only be founded upon their recognition of Anglo-American strength".<sup>3</sup>

On the following day, Truman summoned Secretary of War Stimson who informed him of the progress of work on the atomic bomb. Stimson presented a Memorandum saying: "Within four months we shall in all probability have completed *the most terrible weapon ever known in human history*".<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, he emphasised the decisive effect the bomb might likely have on relations between the U.S. and other countries. The director of the war mobilisation department, James F. Byrnes, assured Truman that the atomic bomb would put the U.S. in a position "to dictate our own terms at the end of the war".<sup>5</sup>

Truman came to believe that the atomic bomb would redouble the potentialities of American diplomacy and would give the U.S. Government a greater chance than other means of pressurising the Soviet Union, and would help "make

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 416-417.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 418.

<sup>3</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, p. 429.

<sup>4</sup> Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1965, p. 56. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>5</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. I, *Year of Decisions*, Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, New York, 1955, p. 87.

Russia more manageable in Europe".<sup>1</sup> "'If it explodes, as I think it will,' he told some of his associates, 'I'll certainly have a hammer on those boys.'"<sup>2</sup>

But time went on without Truman yet having the atomic bomb, and so he was forced into concluding that his attempt to dictate his own terms to the Soviet Union proved futile. Moreover, the United States was itself in a very involved position. After Germany's surrender, *the Soviet Union was no longer in a state of war, while the U.S. continued to fight* against another major aggressor—Japan. With relations with the U.S.S.R. drastically strained by the U.S. Government, Washington began to fear that U.S. policy, while producing no positive results, might lead to the Soviet Union refusing to take part in the defeat of Japan. The U.S. Government was very anxious, furthermore, for the San Francisco Conference to be brought to a successful conclusion. In those circumstances, Truman had to backtrack. He decided to send Hopkins, Roosevelt's closest associate, to Moscow to normalise relations with the U.S.S.R. somewhat.

Hopkins arrived in Moscow on May 25, and had six circumstantial conversations with Stalin in the subsequent days. He pointed out that some elements in the U.S. had always been opposed to cooperation with the Soviet Union. During the previous six weeks, that is after Roosevelt's death, anti-Soviet sentiment in the United States had become particularly widespread. "If present trends continued unchecked," he said, "the entire structure of world cooperation and relations with the Soviet Union which President Roosevelt and the Marshal [Stalin] had labored so hard to build would be destroyed."<sup>3</sup> It followed from Hopkins' comments that the object of his visit was to try and arrest that process.

Stating the Soviet Government's position, Stalin noted that the American attitude towards the Soviet Union had "perceptibly cooled once it became obvious that Germany was defeated, and that it was as though the Americans were saying that the Russians were no longer needed". He produced a number of examples: Argentina had been invited to the San Francisco Conference in spite of the agreement achieved during the Crimea meeting; the United States had gone back on the Crimea Conference decisions regarding the activ-

<sup>1</sup> *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 35, No. 2, January 1957, p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Daniels, *The Man of Independence*, J. B. Lippincott Company, New York, 1950, p. 266. (Emphasis added—V. S.)

<sup>3</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 889.

ities of the Commission on German Reparations and on the Polish question; Lend-Lease supplies had been cut off in an "unfortunate and even brutal" manner; none of the ships of the German fleet though it had surrendered had been turned over to the Russians.<sup>1</sup> Hopkins tried to justify the U.S. Government's position to some extent. He promised to help towards settling certain issues.

The talks centred on the following five questions which had actually brought Hopkins to Moscow.

First, another Great-Power meeting, its venue and timing. This question was successfully settled.

Second, the establishment of a Control Council for Germany, that is, the appointment of a Soviet representative to sit on it so that the Council could get down to business. Stalin announced that the Soviet Union would be represented in the Control Council by Marshal Georgy Zhukov.

Third, the war in the Pacific. The assurances that were given to Hopkins satisfied him. He cabled to Truman: "We were very encouraged by the conference on the Far East."<sup>2</sup>

Fourth, the voting procedure in the Security Council. Showing his good will and desire for cooperation, Stalin accepted the American proposals on the subject. That was welcomed in the U.S. with tremendous satisfaction as it meant settling the last essential controversial issue which complicated the closing stages of the drafting of the United Nations Charter at the San Francisco Conference.

Fifth, the Polish question. Hopkins' comments on that question showed that the U.S. Government had desisted from its attempts to impose such a solution of the Polish question on the Soviet Union as would have been suitable to Washington, and *reverted to what had been decided at the Crimea Conference*. That made agreement possible. It was decided to consult representatives of the Polish Provisional Government and other Polish democratic leaders, which took the matter off the ground.

So the result of Hopkins' visit to Moscow had been to settle in principle a number of essential issues, including the Polish question to a large extent.

Shortly afterwards, representatives of the Polish Provisional Government, Mikolajczyk and some other Polish leaders agreed among themselves as to the composition of the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 893-894.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 903.

Polish Provisional Government of National Unity. Osóbka-Morawski remained head of Government, with Gomulka and Mikolajczyk as his Deputies. Four ministers from among Polish bourgeois politicians were included in the Government together with Mikolajczyk. It was a 21-man government. With the government's social base having been broadened, the members of the former Polish Provisional Government still retained the majority in it.

The Moscow Three-Power Commission on the Polish question held its last meeting on June 22. It approved the decision worked out by the Poles themselves. The formation of a Provisional Government of National Unity was officially announced in Warsaw on June 28.

In a message of July 2 to Churchill, Truman stated that "the new Polish Provisional Government of National Unity has been established *in conformity with the Crimea decision*".<sup>1</sup> He called for the Governments of the U.S. and Great Britain to declare their recognition of it without delay and simultaneously.

France recognised the new Polish Government on June 29, and the U.S. and Britain did so on July 5. The Soviet Government made no special statement of recognition, as it believed that its recognition of the Polish Provisional Government in January 1945 was automatically transferred to it.

The new people's democratic Poland gained international recognition, which meant essentially strengthening her position.

#### SOVIET-YUGOSLAV TREATY OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE, APRIL 11, 1945

The process of strengthening relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia was gaining momentum. The two nations continued the common struggle against Nazi Germany. The liberation of the territory of Yugoslavia from the invaders was about to be completed.

A Provisional Government of Democratic Federative Yugoslavia, headed by Josip Broz Tito, was formed on March 7, 1945. Ivan Šubašić became Minister for Foreign Affairs. In compliance with the Crimea decisions, that Government

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<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, Vol. 7, Prem. 3/473. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

received international recognition. The Ambassadors of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Great Britain arrived in Belgrade during March.

The visit of the Yugoslav Government delegation, led by Josip Broz Tito, to Moscow ended in the signing of a Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-War Cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia. The Treaty provided for the Contracting Parties to continue the struggle until their final victory over Germany and to give each other military and other aid in it. The Treaty contained some provisions regarding the development and consolidation of co-operation between the two countries after the war.<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Union made the decisive contribution towards defeating Nazi Germany throughout the entire period of 1941-1945. The Soviet forces dealt the final and decisive blow at the German troops at the end of the war as well, and captured Berlin.

The role that the nations concerned played in the war against the aggressor bloc determined their part when it came to striking the balance of the war. The Soviet Union's international influence was greater than ever before.

The Soviet Government worked hard for the cooperation, which had been established between the U.S.S.R., the United States, Great Britain and other United Nations in the war years, to be continued and expanded in the context of peace that had ensued in Europe. That made itself particularly clear in the Soviet Union's full-scale constructive participation in the creation of the United Nations Organisation. Soviet diplomacy did much to have the democratic principles of international relations placed at the base of the United Nations Charter drafted at the San Francisco Conference. The U.S.S.R. regarded the new international organisation in the making as an important instrument of safeguarding peace and assuring the security of the nations after the war.

With Nazi Germany heading for her collapse, the British Government, under Winston Churchill, was more and more conspicuously changing its policy towards the Soviet Union, considering it as its next main enemy. As soon as the new

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 3, pp. 175-178 (in Russian).

U.S. President Harry S. Truman came to office, he also adopted a "tough line" on the U.S.S.R. The United States of America and Great Britain tried to impose on the Soviet Union the conditions of post-war peace settlement that were profitable to them. But before long Washington had to acknowledge that the attempt at dealing with the U.S.S.R. in an overbearing way had failed.

## Chapter VIII

### THE CONFERENCE OF BERLIN

One major task Soviet diplomacy faced after Nazi Germany was defeated and forced to surrender, and the war in Europe ended, was to have the Victory established under international law so as to put an end, once and for all, to the danger which had threatened the U.S.S.R. and many other nations, coming as it did from German imperialism which had started two murderous world wars. A further problem for the Three Powers was to concert their policies in respect of Nazi Germany's former war-time allies—Italy, Finland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.

To discuss and resolve all those problems, the leaders of the Three Powers—the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Britain had to meet in conference once again.

This time, it was Berlin, the capital of the vanquished Nazi Reich, that was picked as the venue for this Conference, following the Soviet proposal. That was a point of great political import. It meant striking the balance of the war in Berlin, where German imperialism, militarism and fascism had hatched their plans for aggression which led up to the outbreak of the Second World War. It was important that this balance should become an object lesson for the generations to come.

Berlin was, however, destroyed so much that it was impossible to host a conference in the city itself. So it was decided to hold it at Cecilienhof Palace right near the boundary of Greater Berlin, actually in Potsdam, a town just outside the German capital.

The British Government was particularly in a hurry to have the Conference convened. It believed that the sooner it took place, the stronger would Britain's position be at it. Anthony Eden pointed out in his memoirs that Britain had

"not many cards" in her hand.<sup>1</sup> So the British Government feared that should the Conference take too long in meeting, even those few cards would lose their force.

In a message of May 6 to Truman, Churchill urged that "as soon as possible, there should be a meeting of the three heads of Government".<sup>2</sup> After receiving the President's consent in principle three days later, Churchill sent him a cable on May 12 detailing the reasons for the early organisation of such a meeting. He stated that the American and Canadian troops were leaving Europe. A reduction of the British Armed Forces was forthcoming. American troops would have to leave the areas they held in the Soviet zone of occupation in Germany. The British Premier, using Goebbels' phraseology, claimed that an "iron curtain" had been drawn upon the Soviet front and nobody knew what was going on behind. To whip up passions, Churchill scared Truman by asserting that the withdrawal of American troops from the Soviet zone would entail an "enormous Moscovite advance into the centre of Europe... It would open to the Russians in a very short time a chance to advance if they chose to the waters of the North Sea and the Atlantic." Therefore, Churchill wrote, it was vital to come to an understanding with the U.S.S.R., or see where they were with it, before the forces of the Western Powers in Europe had been weakened.<sup>3</sup>

During a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador, Fyodor Gusev, on May 18, Churchill literally showered him with unjustified claims. He was speaking, the Ambassador reported to Moscow, "with great irritation and unconcealed malice". Churchill even declared that he had ordered the demobilisation of the Air Force to be suspended. The Ambassador believed that was more than blackmail. "Considering the situation which has arisen," he wrote, "we must have in view that, to Churchill, war is his element..."<sup>4</sup>

The major concern of the British Government at the Conference was to weaken the position of those forces which it considered now, with the Nazi aggressors defeated, to be its main enemies. Those were, above all, the Soviet Union as a

<sup>1</sup> Anthony Eden, *Memoirs. The Reckoning*, Cassel, London, 1965, p. 546.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. Diplomatic Papers. The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference). 1945*, Vol. 1, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1960, p. 3.]

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>4</sup> *Soviet-British Relations... Documents*, Vol. 2, pp. 385-389 (in Russian).



Socialist State for which the ruling circles of the British Empire had the greatest class hatred. Those were also the People's Democracies and the national liberation movement. British diplomacy was planning to oppose those forces at the Conference of Berlin together with its American counterpart. But at the same time, the top-level group in London did not want their American Ally to dominate Europe. The British governing quarters expected to reinforce Britain's position which had been shattered, particularly in Europe, during the war. To that end, they planned to create a British-led bloc of West European countries.

The essence of Churchill's strategy at the Conference, in the opinion of a liberal-minded American historian Charles L. Mee was therefore "disruptiveness—to bring the United States and Russia into conflict". In that context, he bluntly admits that this policy, designed "to exacerbate the differences between Russia and America" was "*playing most licentiously with fire*".<sup>1</sup>

The British Government intended to take up the hardest possible line at the Conference in order to impose its will on the Soviet Union. Churchill wanted to have a "showdown" with the Soviet delegation, particularly at the end of the Conference. He maintained later that he was prepared to have "a public break" rather than accept the Soviet proposals regarding Poland's western frontier.<sup>2</sup>

The aims of U.S. imperialism at that Three-Power Conference, which was to strike the major balance of the Second World War, outreached those of Britain. Having considerably expanded its military and economic strength during the war, U.S. imperialism set itself the aim that German imperialism had failed to attain, that of world supremacy. The United States had already captured the dominant position in the capitalist world, and the agents of U.S. monopoly capital were determined to derive the maximum possible benefit from the weakening of their imperialist rivals—both the vanquished enemies and war-time Allies—so as to perpetuate their domination over other capitalist countries. Washington was looking upon Britain, too, as its junior partner and made no bones about planning further meas-

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<sup>1</sup> Charles L. Mee, Jr., *Meeting at Potsdam*, M. Evans & Co., Inc., New York, 1975, p. 38. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>2</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, pp. 581-582.

ures to "take over" her numerous possessions all over the world.

The United States held the Soviet Union to be the major obstacle to its world supremacy. Considering the casualties and damage which the U.S.S.R. had sustained in the war, the U.S. Government hoped it could clear that hurdle also.

Naturally, the class hatred of the U.S. ruling establishment for the Soviet State and all progressive forces was no less than that of their British fellow-thinkers. On that issue, Washington intended to make common cause with London.

Charles L. Mee, whom I have already mentioned, stated that the American delegation setting out for Berlin proceeded from the assumption that it was an "American century" that was setting in, and the United States, relying on its tremendous power, had to use all of its available opportunities to open up this new page in history. He pointed out that the American delegation had representatives of "aggressive capitalism" in it.<sup>1</sup> Truman told his Chief of Staff William Leahy that he proposed "*to take the offensive*" in Berlin.<sup>2</sup>

Truman suggested mid-July 1945 as the opening date of the Conference. That was just about when the U.S. was expecting to test its first atomic bomb. Truman believed that the bomb would give him an opportunity to impose his own will on the other conferees.

Indeed, on their arrival in Berlin on July 16, the American delegation had a report about a successful atomic test explosion in the morning.<sup>3</sup> On July 21, a special messenger brought a detailed account of the blast.<sup>4</sup> Truman and other members of the U.S. delegation as well as Churchill, once informed of the bomb, were unanimous in the view that they should tell Stalin about it so as to use the fact of the U.S. possessing an atomic bomb as an argument in their favour in the negotiations.<sup>5</sup> Describing Churchill's mood at the time, the Chief of the British Imperial General Staff Alan Brooke noted in his diary that "*he was already seeing himself capable of eliminating all the Russian centres of industry and population...*"<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charles L. Mee, Jr., *Meeting at Potsdam*, pp. 21, 126. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>2</sup> William D. Leahy, *I Was There*, p. 382.

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, pp. 1360-1361.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1361-1370.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>6</sup> Arthur Bryant, *Triumph in the West, 1943-1946*, Collins St. James's Place, London, 1959, p. 478. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

On July 23, Truman received information that the first atomic bomb would be ready for use early in August.<sup>1</sup> Although he intended to have that bomb dropped on Japan, it had been decided to use it, first and foremost, as a political leverage on the U.S.S.R. It was the starting point of the notorious American "atomic diplomacy".

President Truman, just as Churchill, had intended to take a tough line in respect of the U.S.S.R. at the Conference. But in the prevailing circumstances, he still did not find it possible to go as far in that respect as the head of British imperialism had planned. That was due, notably, to the fact that the United States was still locked in a fierce struggle with militarist Japan in the Far East, with no end yet in sight. Therefore, Soviet participation in the effort to defeat the Japanese aggressors was of great importance to it. That is to say, for the time being, the U.S. saw no point in a break with the U.S.S.R.

The Governments of the United States and Britain had gone all-out to concert their approach to the issues to be discussed at the Conference. There had been intensive correspondence between Truman and Churchill along with exchanges through normal diplomatic channels. On the eve of the Conference, on July 14, there was a meeting in Potsdam of the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, Alexander Cadogan, and Assistant Secretary of State James Clement Dunn who discussed the negotiating position of both Powers.<sup>2</sup> True, they failed to agree on all points.

The meetings of Truman and Churchill at Potsdam on the eve and in the opening days of the Conference, particularly their conversation on July 18, were also of major importance in this context. The British Premier proposed that the United States and Britain should come to agreement on air and naval cooperation around the world. Having obtained Truman's consent in principle, Churchill went further by suggesting that the Combined Chiefs of Staff of the two Powers, established in war-time, should be kept in being after the war as well. Truman liked the idea too.<sup>3</sup> Churchill's proposals meant in general that the military alliance of Britain and the United States should be maintained even after

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 1, p. 1373.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>3</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, pp. 547-548.

the defeat of Germany and Japan as an instrument to ensure their dominant position in the world.

The Potsdam Conference opened on July 17, 1945. The delegation of the Soviet Union was headed by Josef Stalin, that of the United States by Harry Truman, and that of Great Britain by Winston Churchill, and from July 28 on, by the new British Premier, Clement R. Attlee. Present also were the Foreign Ministers—Vyacheslav Molotov, James F. Byrnes and Anthony Eden (subsequently succeeded by Ernest Bevin) and other diplomatic and military officials of the Three Powers.

Full-delegation meetings were held after lunch time. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs met in the mornings to draft proposals for their Heads of Government to consider.

### PROCEDURES FOR PEACE SETTLEMENT

Wars used to end in peace Conferences. Naturally the question of a peace Conference had also arisen upon the defeat of Germany and the termination of the war in Europe. In their conversations with Harry Hopkins, the Soviet representative emphasised the need for a general peace Conference to be held to settle the European problems.<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. plans were entirely different. The State Department wrote to Truman on June 30: "It is recommended that the United States Government propose *that there be no formal Peace Conference*, but that there be established a Council of the Foreign Ministers of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain, China, France and the United States to deal with the problems of the peace in Europe."<sup>2</sup> American historians have likewise been noting the U.S. Government's reluctance to have a peace Conference convened.<sup>3</sup> Because of the U.S. position, a general peace Conference to settle all issues arising from the defeat of Nazi Germany has never been called.

At the opening plenary session of the Berlin Conference, Truman began by offering to set up the "machinery for the development of peace negotiations". He proposed the establishment of a Council of Foreign Ministers, as if to prepare for a peace Conference.<sup>4</sup> But that was not stated in black and

<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 1, pp. 30-31. (Emphasis added.—V.S.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> Charles L. Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, pp. 21-23.

<sup>4</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 1, p. 609.

white in the draft proposal he had submitted.

Why did American diplomacy have to resort to such a questionable procedure? Most probably because Washington believed it would be easier to realise the U.S. imperialists' ambitions at Five-Power Council meetings with majority support assured in advance than at Peace Conference of many nations.

Following a discussion of the American proposal at the Berlin Conference, it was decided to establish a Council of Foreign Ministers of the Five Powers—the U.S.S.R., the U.S., Britain, France and China, and authorise it, as its immediate task, to draw up the treaties of peace with Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Finland. It was envisaged that the Council should also be utilised for the preparation of a peace settlement for Germany "to be accepted by the Government of Germany when a government adequate for the purpose is established".<sup>1</sup>

Even with the Council established, it was found necessary to continue the periodic consultations of the Foreign Ministers of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Britain, in accordance with the relevant agreement which had been reached at the Crimea Conference. In view of the establishment of the Council of Foreign Ministers, it was decided to dissolve the European Advisory Commission.

That was the first decision adopted at the Conference. It was of substantial significance for post-war peace settlement. At the same time, that decision, taken at the second session of the Conference, on July 18, had a beneficial effect on the subsequent proceedings. It showed that the Three Powers were in a position to arrive at agreed decisions.

### THE GERMAN PROBLEMS

The main problem discussed by the Heads of the Three Powers at the Berlin Conference was that of the post-war treatment of defeated Germany.

In consequence of her defeat and unconditional surrender, Germany was occupied by the forces of the Three Powers which exercised supreme authority on her territory. It was necessary to outline the subsequent path for Germany's development without delay and in a joint effort, define the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 1479.

objectives of the occupation and concert the policies of the occupying Powers on a number of major political and economic issues; it was necessary to delimit the frontiers of Germany. Germany had neither a government of her own, nor any other national authorities for that matter. Her economy was in ruin. The total war which the Nazis had waged had brought the nation to total disarray. During the discussion at the Conference of what, properly speaking, Germany had become after the war, Stalin pointed out that it was difficult to define her as anything but a "crushed country".<sup>1</sup>

Proceeding from the decisions adopted at the Crimea Conference, in the European Advisory Commission, and at the opening meetings of the Allied Control Council for Germany, the representatives of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Great Britain examined the *measures to be taken towards demilitarising, denazifying and democratising Germany* as well as many other major issues crucial to the destinies of the German people.

An agreement, known as the "Political and Economic Principles to Govern the Treatment of Germany in the Initial Control Period", had been worked out at the Conference with the Soviet delegation's most active participation. The object behind that agreement was the development of Germany as a democratic and peaceful State. "German militarism and Nazism will be extirpated", said the report on the Tripartite Conference of Berlin, "and the Allies will take, in agreement together, now and in the future, the other measures necessary to assure that Germany never again will threaten her neighbours or the peace of the world." At the same time, the Three Powers declared that "it is not the intention of the Allies to destroy or enslave the German people". They had proclaimed their intention to give the German people the opportunity to prepare for the eventual reconstruction of their life on a democratic and peaceful basis so as in due course to take their place among the free and peaceful peoples of the world.<sup>2</sup>

It was decided that the purposes of the occupation of Germany were "the complete disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany and the elimination or control of all German industry that could be used for military production". It was

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<sup>1</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, p. 61 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, pp. 1501-1502,

decided that all German land, naval and air forces, the S.S., S.D., S.A., and Gestapo with all their organisations, staffs and institutions, including the General Staff and all other military and paramilitary organisations which served to keep alive the military tradition in Germany shall be completely and finally abolished in such a manner as "permanently to prevent the revival or reorganisation of German militarism and Nazism". All arms were to be held at the disposal of the Allies or destroyed. In order to eliminate Germany's war potential, "the production of arms, ammunition and implements of war as well as all types of aircraft and sea-going ships" was prohibited.<sup>1</sup>

The National-Socialist Party and its supervised organisations were to be destroyed, all Nazi institutions dissolved and all Nazi activity or propaganda prevented, all Nazi laws repealed, and active Nazis removed from public office...

At the same time, all democratic political Parties were allowed and encouraged, free trade unions could be created, and the population of Germany could enjoy the freedom of speech and the press.

The Conference of Berlin adopted a decision which had already been agreed upon about Germany being treated as a single economic entity during the period of occupation. That applied to industrial production and agriculture, wages and prices, import and export programmes, monetary and banking systems, taxation and customs, reparations and the removal of the industrial war potential, transportation and communications. But it was decided that "for the time being no Central German Government shall be established".<sup>2</sup>

The Berlin Agreements provided for supreme authority in Germany in the initial control period to be exercised by the Commanders-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the U.S.S.R., the U.S., Britain, and France, each in his own zone of occupation, and also jointly in matters affecting Germany as a whole, in their capacity as members of the Control Council.

The Soviet representatives proposed that the Ruhr Industrial District, the major arsenal of German militarism, should be in respect of administration under the joint con-

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 1502, 1504.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 1502, 1503, 1504.

trol of the U.S., the U.K., the U.S.S.R. and France. The administration of the District was to be exercised by the Allied Council composed of representatives of these four Powers.<sup>1</sup> However, Britain did not agree to quadripartite control with Soviet participation being established over the Ruhr which was within the British zone of occupation. Churchill was already considering how he could use the manpower and also the military-economic potential of Germany, principally concentrated in the Western zones of occupation, for his imperialist interests, above all, against the U.S.S.R.<sup>2</sup>

A Commission appointed at Yalta to study *the question of dismemberment of Germany* had been working in London since March 1945. Yet its activities proved barren of result. The Soviet representative on the Commission, Fyodor Gusev, sent a letter to its Chairman, Anthony Eden, on March 26, to inform him that the Soviet Government considered the relevant decision of the Crimea Conference "not as a mandatory plan for the dismemberment of Germany, but as a possible perspective for exercising pressure on Germany to render her harmless in case the other expedients prove insufficient". No recommendations regarding the dismemberment of Germany had ever been worked out by the Commission. The Soviet Government's position on the subject was set out also in Stalin's address to the nation on May 9, 1945. He declared that the Soviet Union "is not proposing either to dismember or to destroy Germany".<sup>3</sup> Because of that Soviet stance, the question of Germany's dismemberment was never again taken up.

However, as one could see from Harry Hopkins' conversation with Stalin in June 1945, President Truman still "was inclined towards dismemberment" and in any event was for the detachment of the Saar, Ruhr and the West bank of the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 1000.

<sup>2</sup> Those plans of Churchill's had the full backing of the British military establishment too. I have referred earlier on to the plan Churchill nurtured to use German troops to crush the Soviet State after Germany's surrender in the First World War. Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander had joined Churchill's "14-nation crusade" late in 1919; he commanded the German troops tacked together in the Baltic countries. Now, Field Marshal Sir Harold Alexander, Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean, was still quite vocal in calling for German troops to be used against the Soviet Union. Alexander's plans were reported to Washington on July 12, 1945, by the U.S. Ambassador in Rome, Alexander Kirk (*FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 1, p. 266).

<sup>3</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 3, p. 45.



Rhine.<sup>1</sup> Admiral William Leahy, who was involved in working up American plans on the way from Washington to Berlin, informed Robert Murphy, a member of the American delegation, on his arrival for the Conference, that Truman had made a detailed study of Roosevelt's plans for the dismemberment of Germany and was in agreement with them. Leahy commented that "the new President was favourably disposed, on the basis of Roosevelt's ideas, toward any proposals which might be made at Potsdam for partitioning Germany".<sup>2</sup> The final version of the proposals drawn up by the U.S. Government for the Conference of Berlin provided for the partition of "Germany into separate sovereign states", including the creation of a Southern German State, with its capital in Vienna, to be composed of the German States of Bavaria, Baden, and Württemberg as well as Austria and Hungary.<sup>3</sup>

Considering the position of the Soviet Government, the proposals for the dismemberment of Germany were never submitted by the American delegation to the Conference.

That did not mean at all, however, that the U.S. ruling elite had dropped its plans. But during the Conference of Berlin it was becoming obvious that those plans were taking on a different shape. It boiled down to the prospect of Germany being broken up in half, the Western zones and the Soviet zone of occupation. George F. Kennan pointed out in his diary at the time: "We have no choice but to lead our section of Germany—the section of which we and the British have accepted responsibility—to a form of independence ..."<sup>4</sup> Kennan conceded that what he meant was "dismemberment". West Germany, within the limits of the British, American (and subsequently also French) zones of occupation was, as the ruling elements of the U.S. and Britain saw it, to become their ally against the U.S.S.R. in due course. Therefore, any further partitioning of the Western part of Germany was considered no longer desirable as that would mean weakening the West German ally of the U.S. and Britain. Instead of a one-time political act, the American and British Governments gravitated towards the idea that it would

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 1, p. 50. The British Government, intent as it was on turning Germany into its ally against the U.S.S.R., had by then given up the dismemberment idea.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, pp. 269-270.

<sup>3</sup> William D. Leahy, *I Was There*, p. 390.

<sup>4</sup> George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950*, Boston, 1967, p. 258.

be wiser to make the preparations for the division of Germany gradually, notably, through economic action. It was the discussion of the *reparations issue*, as will be seen further on, that brought this out at the Conference.

That was a hotly debated issue, indeed. Reparations were to be a measure of Germany's economic disarmament as well as a means of at least partial compensation of the damage caused by the Reich to the victims of its aggression.

The question of reparations came up for discussion soon after the Conference had opened. But it was at the very end of it that an agreed decision on reparations was achieved along with the settlement of some other issues.

The total damage caused by the Nazi aggressors to the Soviet economy and the Soviet citizens individually had been estimated to amount to a tremendous total of around 2,569,000 million roubles. The Soviet Government's reparation claims were very modest, compared with that damage. "We have lost very much equipment in this war, an awful lot of it, indeed," Stalin pointed out at the Conference. "At least *one-twentieth* of it must be compensated for."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet delegation proceeded from the assumption, agreed upon with the American delegation at Yalta, that the basis for discussion as the total sum of reparations was 20 billion dollars, of which 50 per cent was to go to the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet proposals for reparations from Germany, submitted to the Conference of Berlin, provided for approximately 50 per cent of the total to be covered by way of once for all removals from Germany's national wealth within two years after the capitulation and the remaining 50 per cent by way of annual deliveries in kind for ten years.<sup>2</sup>

The representatives of Britain and the U.S. took to stonewalling over the issue of reparations for the Soviet Union. They sought to prove, in particular, that Germany's potentialities for the payment of reparations had decreased

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<sup>1</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, p. 251—in Russian. (Emphasis added.—V.S.) The West German writer, Wolfgang Marienfeld described the Soviet reparation claim of 10,000 million dollars as "quite understandable and most legitimate", if one were "to measure it against the scale of war-wrought devastation in Russia" (Wolfgang Marienfeld, *Konferenzen über Deutschland*, Hannover, 1963, S. 196). American historian A. B. Ulam has also found the Soviet reparation claim to be "most justified" (A. B. Ulam, *Expansion and Co-existence...*, p. 391).

<sup>2</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, pp. 354-355 (in Russian).

in the period between the Crimea Conference and Germany's surrender because of war-wrought destruction.<sup>1</sup> Molotov challenged that contention. In February 1945, the Three Powers presumed, he said, that there would be more destruction in Germany than it turned out to be. "Soviet experts," the People's Commissar declared, "have established that the damage caused to the industrial enterprises of the Ruhr District amounts to between five and ten per cent of its productive capacity in some cases and fifteen per cent on rare occasions."<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. Government went back on the principle it had adhered to at Yalta regarding reparations. There had been no occupation, nor any devastation of the territory of the United States by the German forces. For that reason, the U.S. itself could not lay any particular reparation claim. The U.S. government quarters showed no interest in reparations alleviating in any way economic difficulties which the Soviet Union experienced because of the barbaric Nazi invasion. It was rather the other way round. They expected to exploit those difficulties in order to impose their own will on the Soviet Union. Furthermore, as American historian Charles Mee points out, Washington no longer wanted Germany to be weakened as it hoped to set her against the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup>

At the Conference of Berlin, the delegations of the U.S. and Britain teamed up against any definite sum of reparations from Germany being established. In a bid to reshape the basis agreed upon at Yalta for the resolution of the reparation problem, the American delegation proposed that each of the occupying Powers should obtain reparations from its own zone.<sup>4</sup> That proposal signified that the Soviet Union would have received only a fraction of the reparations due to it. Yet, it was the Soviet zone of occupation that had suffered most from hostilities. Moreover, the industries that were to have provided the bulk of reparation assets, were situated, above all, in the British and American zones (as the Ruhr). Stalin also pointed out that the Western Powers had, contrary to their promises, taken goods and equipment out of that section of the Soviet zone which they

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 209, 220.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>3</sup> Charles L. Mee, Jr., *Meeting at Potsdam*, p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> See: *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, pp. 152, 210, 219, 238-243 (in Russian).

had occupied before the Soviet troops moved in.<sup>1</sup> Their removals included upwards of 200 tonnes of gold, equipment, technical documentation, laboratory plant for the production of V-1 and V-2, aircraft, optical devices (like those of Zeiss of Jena) and many other articles, paintings, and other valuables, etc. Over 13,000 railway cars (including 10,413 carloads of goods) had been driven away.<sup>2</sup>

Although, technically, the new American proposal was connected with the problem of reparations, it actually went far towards shaping the entire future of Germany. Molotov stated that in case it was carried out, Germany "will not be considered as a single economic entity".<sup>3</sup> Charles Mee points out that the American proposal arose from the desire of the United States to detach West Germany from the rest of the country and "bring it firmly into an American sphere of influence" which, in the long run, meant splitting Germany.<sup>4</sup>

In connection with the American proposal, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs pointed out that the Soviet zone contained less than half Germany's national wealth. Therefore, he insisted on the U.S.S.R. receiving two billion dollars' worth of industrial equipment also from the Western zones.<sup>5</sup> However, Byrnes refused to have a fixed amount established for reparations for the U.S.S.R. from the Western zones. That was because the U.S. proposed allowing no more than 214 million dollars' worth of reparations to the Soviet Union to come from those zones.<sup>6</sup>

Byrnes' proposals about reparations for the Soviet Union were linked up with the settlement of the question of the Western frontier of Poland and also the questions of concluding the Treaties of Peace with Italy, Finland, Bulgaria and Hungary, establishing diplomatic relations with them and admitting them to the U.N.<sup>7</sup> Considering the readiness which the United States began to show towards the end of the Conference to yield some ground on some matters of fundamental importance to Poland and other countries of

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<sup>1</sup> See: *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, pp. 250, 253 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 392-393, 432-433.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>4</sup> Charles L. Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, pp. 127, 163.

<sup>5</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, pp. 296-297.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 892.

<sup>7</sup> See: *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, pp. 267-268 (in Russian).

Eastern Europe, the Soviet Government finally agreed to make certain concessions as regards reparations for the U.S.S.R. The Soviet delegation decided not to insist on either the total sum of reparations from Germany or the sum of reparation deliveries from the Western zones being fixed, but consented to confine itself to fixing the size of deliveries from those zones as a percentage of the total sum of reparations from them.

Under the reparations decision, Germany was compelled "to compensate to the greatest possible extent for the loss and suffering that she caused to the United Nations and for which the German people cannot escape responsibility..." It was complete industrial capital equipment "as is unnecessary for the German peace economy" that was intended for reparations. It was envisaged that the reparation claim of the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries entitled to reparations should be met from the Western Zones and from appropriate German external assets. The reparation claims of the U.S.S.R. were to be met from the Soviet zone of occupation. Furthermore, the Soviet Union was to receive 25 per cent of the industrial equipment that would be removed as reparations from the three Western Zones of occupation in Germany (10 per cent free and 15 per cent in exchange for food, coal, timber, petroleum products and other commodities). The U.S.S.R. undertook to settle the reparation claim of Poland from its own share of reparations.<sup>1</sup>

There was a heated discussion over *the German Navy and Merchant Marine*. Churchill was trying to separate the settlement of the Navy question from any decision on the question of general compensation for the damage done by the Nazi Reich to other countries and to share out the German fleet in accordance with how many ships each of the Three Powers had lost during the war. That attempt was not destined to succeed. The proposal submitted by the Soviet Government called for one-third of Germany's total Navy and Merchant Marine to be handed over to the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> The Soviet delegation succeeded in having its legitimate demand met. It was decided to divide the German Navy and Merchant Marine equally between the U.S.S.R., Britain and the U.S.A. The larger part of the German submarine

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<sup>1</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, pp.489-490 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.322.

fleet was to be destroyed, in accordance with the British proposal. Tripartite commissions were to be set up to draft specific proposals for the distribution of warships and merchant vessels. The actual transfers of German warships to the Powers concerned were to be completed not later than February 15, 1946, and that of merchant vessels after the end of the war against Japan.<sup>1</sup>

The Conference of Berlin had to deal again with the *question of East Prussia* which had more than once served as a bridgehead for German eastward aggrandizement. The Soviet Government called for the Königsberg area to be turned over to the U.S.S.R.<sup>2</sup> Stalin pointed out that "President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill gave their consent on that score back at the Tehran Conference, and that question had been agreed upon by the three of them. We are anxious to see this agreement approved at this Conference".<sup>3</sup> The representatives of the United States and Britain agreed to the Soviet proposal, and the position of the Three Powers on that subject was recorded in the decisions of the Conference.<sup>4</sup>

The next question discussed was that of *the punishment of the Nazi war criminals*. "War criminals and those who have participated in planning and carrying out Nazi enterprises involving or resulting in atrocities or war crimes shall be arrested and brought to trial,"<sup>5</sup> the decisions of the Conference stated. The question of a trial of the major war criminals was considered as a special item. The Three Governments reaffirmed their intention to bring those criminals to swift and sure justice.<sup>6</sup> The decisions taken by the Conference with regard to the punishment of the Nazi war criminals meant complying with the demand of the peoples who had sustained heavy casualties and incredible privation on account of the criminal deeds of the German fascists who had started the war, exterminated and enslaved millions of people, and committed countless other monstrous crimes.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, pp.468-470. (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.351.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.162.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.471.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.463.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.471.

## THE POLISH PROBLEMS

The Soviet Union had a heavy stake in the future of Poland. As I have already pointed out, the policy of the pre-war reactionary and imperialist Poland had been largely responsible for making it possible for German imperialism to overrun Poland and then use her territory as a bridge-head from which to attack the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Government considered it necessary to do everything possible to prevent such a situation from repeating itself.

The Polish question was discussed at the Conference in two aspects. The first one was *the problem of finally dissolving the London-based Polish Government in exile*.

The Polish Provisional Government of National Unity enjoyed great prestige in Poland. Even Anthony Eden, speaking at the Conference of Berlin, noted the Polish people's conviction that this Government was "on sure ground" and pointed out that its prestige was rising all the time.<sup>1</sup>

However, the Government in London, although it was no longer officially recognised by the British Government, actually continued to exist, had its ministers, and its press, and did not intend to declare itself dissolved. Moreover, it continued to dispose of some of the property of the Polish State in the Western countries, including the Polish Navy and Merchant Marine. The Soviet Government found such a situation to be contrary to the Allied Agreements, and insisted on it being brought to an end without delay.<sup>2</sup>

The Conference passed a resolution expressing satisfaction with the formation of the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity recognised by the Three Powers. It stated that this led to Britain and the United States withdrawing their recognition from the former Polish Government in London which "no longer exists."<sup>3</sup> That sealed the fate of the Arciszcewski Government.

There was extremely hectic controversy over Poland's Western frontiers.

The Soviet delegation submitted a written proposal to the effect that "pending the final settlement of territorial questions at the Peace Congress", the Western frontier of Poland should be fixed along the line: "West of Swinemünde

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<sup>1</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, p. 38 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 318-319.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 472.

to the river Oder leaving Stettin on the Polish side, further up the river Oder to the estuary of the river Neisse to the Czechoslovakian frontier."<sup>1</sup>

Since the United States and Britain failed to have a Government to their liking established in Poland, they had no stake in the consolidation of the Polish state or its security by turning more land in the west over to it. In those circumstances, Churchill and Truman were opposing the Soviet proposals on Poland's western frontiers stubbornly and even rudely.

The U.S. Government had defined its position on the question of the German-Polish border well in advance. Appropriate documents had been included in the briefing paper containing resolutions and proposals regarding the position of the United States which the U.S. delegation brought with it to the Conference. These provided that "in the North, Poland should receive the Free City of Danzig and the bulk of East Prussia and in the West, the only rectification of the 1939 Polish-German frontier should be to include in Poland a small strip of German Pomerania west of the so-called Polish Corridor..."<sup>2</sup>

Britain's stand on the question of Poland's western frontier had been formulated in a Memorandum drawn up by the Foreign Office on July 12. London found it possible to transfer to Poland the Free City of Danzig, East Prussia, Oppeln, German Eastern Silesia and the most Eastern portion of Pomerania. If the Soviet Government insisted on its proposals, the United States and British Governments intended to refuse the Soviet Union's share of reparations from the British and American zones of occupation.<sup>3</sup>

When this issue came up for discussion at the Berlin Conference on July 21, Truman began to put forward his objections to the Soviet proposals. It now appears, he said, as if another occupying Government, that of Poland, was being assigned a zone in Germany, which was being done without consultation. The U.S. President pointed out that this would reduce the possibility of reparations being obtained from Germany. As he said that, he declared several times that

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 331-332.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 1, pp. 746, 750.

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 1, pp. 777-781; Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. V, p.413.



there would be a different place to determine the frontiers at, namely, a Peace Conference.<sup>1</sup>

But, as I said, the U.S. Government, while preparing for the Berlin meeting, had decided that it was worth while avoiding a Peace Conference for a comprehensive peace settlement with Germany. So, as American historian Charles Mee stated, when Truman spoke of a Peace Conference, "he referred to something that would never occur. He meant therefore, that he was putting a problem off to become a permanent bone of contention".<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with the decisions of the Crimea Conference to the effect that there would have to be consultations with the Polish Government on the question of frontiers, the Soviet delegation insisted on the representatives of Poland being invited to the Berlin Conference.<sup>3</sup> The delegations of the Western Powers attempted to dodge inviting Polish representatives, unwilling to reckon with their opinion.<sup>4</sup> But the Soviet delegation still succeeded in having that decision of the Crimea Conference complied with.

The Polish representatives (Chairman of the National Assembly Boleslaw Bierut, Stanislaw Mikolajczyk and others), having arrived for the Conference, met the Heads of Government and Foreign Ministers of the Three Powers and gave them a detailed account of their position regarding the Polish Western frontiers. They called for Poland's Western frontier to be established along the Oder and the Western Neisse. The Soviet delegation fully supported the position of the Government of Poland.<sup>5</sup>

However, the British Government's position concerning Poland's western frontier remained one of stonewalling. It made the adoption of an agreed decision on the substance of the case virtually impossible. In a significant confession in that context, Churchill said that in the event of a Conserva-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, pp. 117-119 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Charles L. Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, p. 158.

<sup>3</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, pp. 135, 137, 138, 139 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> Charles L. Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*, p. 169. Churchill told his associates that he "did not want to see" the representatives of Poland (Ibid., p. 171).

<sup>5</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, pp. 172-174 (in Russian).

tive election victory, neither he nor Eden "would ever have agreed to the western Neisse being the frontier line".<sup>1</sup>

The United States resorted to "heavy artillery" with atomic bomb blackmail as a special weapon.

As the Conference rose on July 24, Truman, with an air of affected importance, walked all across the hall to Stalin to tell him that the Americans had developed a new bomb "of unusual destructive force". Truman had to state with disappointment, however, that the "bomb" had not produced any particular impression on his interlocutor. "The Russian Premier showed no special interest," Truman wrote.<sup>2</sup>

The American diplomatic "move" did not score. The "bomb" device did not work against the U.S.S.R. And that meant that the U.S. could not expect to dictate its will at the conference. Some of the British and Americans even suggested that Stalin was unable to understand the extraordinary importance of the discovery made. That was, however, not true at all. Georgy Zhukov writes in his memoirs that, back from the session, Stalin told Molotov, in Zhukov's presence, about his conversation with Truman.

"Molotov said right away:

'They are 'bidding up'.

"Stalin burst laughing:

'Let them bid up. We've got to talk to Kurchatov about speeding up our work.'"

I understood, Zhukov points out, that he referred to the atomic bomb.<sup>3</sup>

The first attempt of the U.S. President to resort to atomic blackmail failed. Then he decided to make a public demonstration of the atomic bomb, for the benefit, above all, of the Soviet Union. Truman expected that it would, after all, compel the U.S.S.R. to recognise the dominant position of the United States in the world and to yield ground on various issues, including those which concerned the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe. On the same day, July 24, Truman ordered the Commander of the United States Army Strategic Forces to "deliver its first special bomb as soon as weather will permit visual bombing after

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<sup>1</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, London, 1954, p.581.

<sup>2</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 416.

<sup>3</sup> Georgy Zhukov, *Recollections and Reflections*, Moscow, 1972, p. 685 (in Russian).

about 3 August 1945 on one of the targets: Hiroshima, Kokura, Niigata and Nagasaki".<sup>1</sup>

On July 25. Churchill announced that he was flying to London to hear the results of the British parliamentary election on the following day. "But we shall be back by the afternoon sitting on July 27," he added, "or at least some of us will", which amused everyone.<sup>2</sup>

The British Conservatives suffered a landslide defeat in that election. Labour won it, Clement Attlee became the new Prime Minister, and Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary. It was they who represented Great Britain at the Conference of Berlin subsequently. Churchill no longer came back to Berlin. He had definitely failed to carry out his plans at the Conference.

The Labour Government's position at the Conference was, in point of fact, a follow-up to Conservative policy. Just before leaving for Berlin, Churchill had stated at a War Cabinet sitting that the Labour representatives who had been in the wartime coalition government were of the same mind as other ministers on foreign policy issues.<sup>3</sup>

Even U.S. Secretary of State James F. Byrnes pointed out that with Clement Attlee and Ernest Bevin in for the Conference, "Britain's stand on the issues before the conference was not altered in the slightest", demonstrating full continuity. They began by calling on the U.S. President, and Bevin "immediately and forcefully presented his strong opposition" to the Soviet proposals regarding the Western frontier of Poland.<sup>4</sup>

The Labour leaders still did not, apparently, find it possible to start their international activity by breaking down the Conference. This facilitated the drafting of agreed decisions on the issues under consideration. Furthermore, the Soviet stand at the Conference could leave the Americans

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<sup>1</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 420.

<sup>2</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, p. 197; Charles L. Mee, Jr., *Meeting at Potsdam*, p. 203. The Soviet Embassy in London cabled to Moscow on July 27 that even some Conservatives admitted that "the anti-Soviet press campaign calling for war against the Soviet Union, which had been going on before the election, was the greatest mistake of Churchill and the Conservatives which had predetermined the outcome of the election" (*Soviet-British Relations... Documents*, Vol. 2, p. 416).

<sup>3</sup> Public Record Office, Cab. 65/54.

<sup>4</sup> James F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, London, 1947, p.79.

and the British in no doubt that the Soviet Union, which had not shown a white feather in the face of the "invincible" Nazi Reich, would not flinch in the face of atomic blackmail either.

On July 30, Byrnes handed Molotov a document in which the U.S. Government finally expressed its consent to Poland's frontier passing along the Western Neisse. However, it contained the reservation that "the final delimitation of the western frontier of Poland should await the peace settlement".<sup>1</sup>

At the Big Three meeting on July 31, the U.S. delegation brought up the aforementioned proposal consisting of three interconnected parts (a "package deal", as we would call it nowadays). Since the Soviet Union had yielded ground with regard to reparations from the Western Zones of Germany, the U.S. delegation declared that it was making concessions in respect of two other issues.<sup>2</sup>

The new British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, finally gave his consent at that meeting to the above-mentioned line of Poland's Western frontier.<sup>3</sup> True, he made a last-minute attempt to reduce the agreed decision to naught by proposing that "reference be made to the fact that the conclusion was reached instead of the agreement being reached"<sup>4</sup> in respect of Poland's Western frontier. But Bevin never succeeded in having this amendment inserted in the agreed text.

On the whole, one may conclude that the closing sessions of the Conference, which took place after Churchill's departure, brought tensions down. It was at those meetings that most of the decisions, including some on the most important and complicated issues, were adopted.

Byrnes attempted to make out the consent to the establishment of the Polish Western frontier along the Oder and the Western Neisse as a concession to the Soviet Union. But Molotov made the point clear by explaining that it was a concession to Poland, not to the U.S.S.R.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, p. 417 (in Russian); *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, pp. 480, 1150.

<sup>2</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, p. 247 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, p. 600. See also *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, p. 297 (in Russian).

<sup>5</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, p. 489.

So, obviously enough, the Soviet Union had to fight a hard battle at the Conference over the issue of Poland's Western frontier. But by making certain concessions on the question of reparations for the Soviet Union, the Soviet representatives succeeded in having the Western frontier of new Poland delimited along the Oder-Western Neisse line.

The resolutions of the Berlin Conference recorded that "the former German territories east of a line running from the Baltic Sea immediately west of Swinemünde, and thence along the Oder River to the confluence of the Western Neisse River and along the Western Neisse to the Czechoslovak frontier, including that portion of East Prussia not placed under the administration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in accordance with the understanding reached at this conference and including the area of the former Free City of Danzig, shall be under the administration of the Polish State and for such purposes should not be considered as a part of the Soviet zone of occupation in Germany."<sup>1</sup> The three Heads of Government also agreed on the transfer of the German population from the areas being turned over to Poland.<sup>2</sup>

True, the resolutions of the Conference said that the final delimitation of Poland's Western frontier had to be deferred until the "peace settlement". But the mere fact that the Berlin Conference provided for the Germans to be evicted from the territories handed over to Poland meant that these decisions were irrevocable, i.e. final.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, they were fixed in the treaties the Polish People's Republic concluded with the GDR on July 6, 1950, and with the FRG, on December 7, 1970.

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, pp. 1509, 1491.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.1511, 1495.

<sup>3</sup> Official American historian Herbert Feis could not fail to admit in his work on the Potsdam Conference that the decisions it adopted with regard to the regions east of the Oder and the Western Neisse "meant the permanent detachment of this part of Germany" regardless of the above-mentioned reservation. (Herbert Feis, *Between War and Peace. The Potsdam Conference*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, London: Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 260). A West German moderately conservative historian, Andreas Hillgruber, also finds the resolutions adopted to be virtually irreversible (Andreas Hillgruber, *Sowjetische Aussenpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Athenäum/Droste Taschenbücher Geschichte*, 1979, p.140).

## POLICY TOWARDS ITALY, ROMANIA, BULGARIA, HUNGARY AND FINLAND

There was some substantive discussion at the Conference also on Three Power policies towards the European countries which had done some of the fighting for the fascist aggressors before capitulating, breaking with Nazi Germany and declaring war on her.

The American delegation raised the question of Italy at the very first session, and tabled its written proposals on the subject. Although Italy had been a major ally of the Nazis, Truman supported her application to be admitted to the United Nations Organisation. He spoke up also for the termination of the surrender terms for Italy and for replacing them by certain commitments of the Italian Government prompted by the new situation in Italy.<sup>1</sup>

Churchill, while accepting the essentials of Truman's proposals, objected to the abrogation of the surrender terms for Italy, considering that move to be premature.<sup>2</sup>

On the eve of the Berlin Conference, the question of Britain's policy towards Italy had been most thoroughly examined in London. The main thrust of that policy was "to prevent it [Italy] from turning Communist" and from cooperating with the U.S.S.R. and "to encourage Italy to look to the West".<sup>3</sup> To that end, it was found necessary to render the Italian Government all possible material and other assistance, leaving it in possession of enough armed forces to "secure internal order", help it in training the army as well as in reorganising the police, and holding elections while there still were sizable British and American forces in that country and before the winter-related economic hardships had strengthened the influence of the Communists, who were "the best organised of the parties". Anglo-American cooperation was found to be useful for carrying out those measures. It was stated that the positions of Britain and the U.S.A. coincided over the major points, that is, in keeping Italy "within the western orbit", although there were some divergencies between them on the other issues.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, p. 47 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, Vol. III, pp. 478, 482-484, 487.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 482, 485-486, 488.

While offering to alleviate the condition of one of the major fascist aggressors, viz., Italy, the U.S. delegation treated other former allies of Germany in an entirely different manner. It demanded "the immediate reorganisation of the present governments in Romania and Bulgaria". The American delegation declared more than once that it was only after such a reorganisation that it would be possible for diplomatic relations to be established and peace treaties to be concluded with Romania and Bulgaria. Truman stressed that the governments of Romania and Bulgaria could have the recognition of the United States only if they complied with those demands and organised themselves in the way the U.S. wanted.<sup>1</sup>

So there was a fundamental difference between the U.S. approach to Italy, on the one hand, and to Romania and Bulgaria, on the other. One simple reason behind this was that Italy had a capitalist regime while Romania and Bulgaria had already a people's democratic system of government installed. The U.S. Government considered the restoration of the former reactionary order in Romania and Bulgaria to be one of the major objectives to attain at the Berlin Conference. That was the sum and substance of all the proposals submitted at the Conference by the American representatives concerning those two countries.

As to Churchill's position in respect of Romania and Bulgaria, it coincided with the American one in terms of its class objectives. But there was a divergence of opinion between the U.S. and Britain over the diplomatic tactics to be used for the attainment of those objectives. The British Government presumed that it would be worthwhile concluding the Treaties of Peace with those countries without delay,<sup>2</sup> which, as it hoped, could loosen their bond with the U.S.S.R. Washington, however, proceeded from the assumption that there was no sense in hurrying up with a peace settlement and that this issue was to be used as a means of pressure to secure the reorganisation of the Romanian and Bulgarian governments.<sup>3</sup> American historians have been pointing out that Churchill and Truman brought forward a

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Vol. II, pp.359, 644.

<sup>2</sup> On the eve of the Conference (July 15) the feeling in London was that they should not be frightened by the prospect of finding themselves "on this occasion in agreement with the Russians against the Americans" (Public Record Office, Prem. 3/430/3).

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 1, pp. 360-361.

programme at the conference for "insuring that Romania and Bulgaria should be organized on the Western model, and remain in the Western orbit."<sup>1</sup>

The head of the Soviet Government, while accepting the proposal to ease the condition of Italy, pointed out that it would be right and proper in that context, while considering the issue of Italy, to discuss the position of Romania, Bulgaria and Finland. "It would be good," he said, "while alleviating the position of Italy, to do likewise with regard to these countries and to consider all the issues involved together."<sup>2</sup>

At about the same time, on July 20, the Soviet delegation handed a Memorandum to the American and British delegations indicating the lack of motivation behind their demand about the reorganisation of the Governments of Romania and Bulgaria. The Memorandum pointed out that in Romania and Bulgaria as well as in Finland and Hungary since the signature of the agreements of surrender by the Governments of the said States, there had been due order and legal authority trusted and respected by the populations of these States. The Governments of these States were faithfully carrying out the obligations assumed by them under the respective instruments of surrender. In these circumstances, the Memorandum said, the Soviet Government saw no reason for interfering in the domestic affairs of Romania and Bulgaria. It considered it necessary "to restore in the nearest days diplomatic relations with Romania, Bulgaria, Finland and Hungary as further delay in this respect could not be justified".<sup>3</sup>

At the Foreign Ministers' meeting Vyacheslav Molotov emphasised that the Soviet Union could no longer delay the recognition of the Governments of these States.<sup>4</sup>

One point of essential tactical importance was that Soviet diplomacy succeeded in linking up the discussion of the attitudes to Italy and to Romania and Bulgaria.

Countering the British and U.S. Governments' assaults on Romania and Bulgaria, the Soviet Government stressed in its Memorandum of July 20 that there were some coun-

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<sup>1</sup> D. F. Fleming, *Cold War and Its Origins*, Vol. I, p. 290.

<sup>2</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, p. 97 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, p. 698.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.



tries whose position was abnormal, indeed. The Soviet document referred to the situation in Greece following the British armed intervention which led to an extremely reactionary order being re-established in that country.

The line Soviet diplomacy had taken up on that question induced the British and U.S. Governments to retreat. For the record of British armed intervention in the affairs of Greece was very unseemly indeed. In a setting that was disadvantageous for the United States and Britain, their representatives preferred to withdraw their demand for the reorganisation of the Governments of Romania and Bulgaria to avoid having the events in Greece brought into the limelight.

The British and American delegations persisted, however, in their attempts to prove that neither the Romanian nor the Bulgarian Governments were "representative" since there had been no elections either in Romania or Bulgaria as yet. So, they argued, it was impossible to establish diplomatic relations with them or admit them to the U.N.

The Soviet representatives proved that contention to be totally groundless. They pointed out that Italy had no freely elected government either, and that its Government, as well as the Governments of Romania and Bulgaria, had been formed in consequence of an agreement between the major parties. However, diplomatic relations with Italy had been resumed.<sup>1</sup> The Soviet delegation stressed that Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland must not be treated any worse than Italy, the former major ally of Nazi Germany. Therefore, it was quite possible to establish diplomatic relations with the Romanian and Bulgarian Governments as well.<sup>2</sup>

Stalin put forward a compromise proposal that each of the Three Powers should independently consider establishing diplomatic relations with Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland. Truman expressed his agreement with that proposal.<sup>3</sup> However, Churchill was stubbornly opposing such a decision, invoking all kinds of excuses. It was not until July 31 that the decision on the issue had been agreed, after all, incorporating certain amendments (concerning exam-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, pp. 102, 179, 225 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 172, 179, 191, 226.

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, p. 363.

ination of the question of diplomatic relations "to the full extent possible".<sup>1</sup>

The Governments of the United States and Britain started to insist on an opportunity to influence the course of events in Romania and Bulgaria by supervising and monitoring the elections which were due to be held there. They alluded, in particular, to the alleged absence of favourable conditions for the activity of their newsmen in those countries. While considering the freedom for foreign pressmen in Romania and Bulgaria to be a natural requisite, the Soviet representatives opposed the idea of sending special observers of the Three Powers to those countries to monitor the elections. In view of the negative stand of the Soviet delegation, the issue of Three-Power supervision of the elections in Romania and Bulgaria was struck off the agenda. As to the status of foreign pressmen, the Soviet delegation succeeded in having the Three-Power decision on the subject framed and couched in terms that were quite different from those suggested by the British and American representatives.<sup>2</sup>

Yet another question raised was that of extending the rights and field of operation of the American and British representatives in the Allied Control Commission for Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary.<sup>3</sup> The U.S. and Britain intended to take advantage of their participation in those commissions to influence the domestic development of those countries, hold up progressive political change and support the reactionary forces.

Even before the Conference (July 12-16), the representatives of the United States and Great Britain in the Allied Control Commissions for Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania were presented with the Soviet Government's proposals concerning certain changes in the working procedure of those commissions following the end of the war against Nazi Germany. Those proposals were put at the root of the Conference decisions on the subject at issue.<sup>4</sup>

While rejecting the groundless contentions of the Ame-

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, p. 530; *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)* p. 249 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, pp. 107, 149, 474 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, pp. 241, 646, 647.

<sup>4</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, pp. 384-387, 475, 478-479 (in Russian).

rican and British representatives regarding the situation in Romania and Bulgaria, the Soviet representatives, determined as they were to facilitate the adoption of mutually acceptable decisions on the entire set of issues regarding the policies in respect of Romania and Bulgaria, showed themselves to be willing to accept certain compromise arrangements which were eventually formalised as Conference decisions.

The decisions of the Berlin Conference pointed out that the three governments concerned considered it desirable that "the present anomalous position of Italy, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary and Romania should be terminated by the conclusion of Peace Treaties." The conclusion of such treaties "with recognised democratic Governments in these States", the resolution of the Conference said further on, "will also enable the Three Governments to support applications from them for membership of the United Nations. The Three Governments agree to examine each separately in the near future, in the light of the conditions then prevailing, the establishment of diplomatic relations with Finland, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary to the extent possible prior to the conclusion of peace treaties with those countries." The participants in the Conference declared that they had "no doubt that in view of the changed conditions resulting from the termination of the war in Europe, representatives of the Allied Press will enjoy full freedom to report to the world upon developments in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland". In view of the termination of hostilities, it was likewise decided to make certain modifications of the working procedure of the Allied Control Commissions in those countries.<sup>1</sup>

The solution of all three questions, which turned out to have been tied up by Byrnes in a "package deal", meant that the Conference was about to end successfully. At first, the American delegation brought forward that "package" as something like a dictatorial imposition. But that attempt failed. The Soviet delegation succeeded in introducing substantial improvements into the American proposals regarding each of the three questions.

Referring to this compromise, American historian Herbert Feis points out that these major issues remained unresolved

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, pp. 1492, 1494. The U.S.S.R. established diplomatic relations with Romania on August 6, with Bulgaria on August 14-16, and with Hungary on September 25.

although the Conference had been going on for about two weeks. The American and the British delegation began to ponder what was likely to happen if the Conference dispersed without an accord on these focal issues. They found the possibilities to be "sombre". "How could they [the Russians] be deterred, without going to war, from doing what they wanted in areas under their control? How might an acknowledged break affect plans for Soviet entry into the war against Japan and Soviet actions in the Far East? Would it not impair the formation of the United Nations...?" It was decided, Feis notes, that "the more prudent course would be to pay tribute to the power of the Soviet Union" and accept its demands with respect to Poland if the Soviet Government would make concessions in regard to German reparations from the British and American zones of occupation in Germany, and also Italy. "After all," Feis writes, "who with any knowledge of history could expect the United States and its friends to have all their own way, to secure settlements that were wholly what they wanted? The usual results of diplomacy were work-a-day compromises."<sup>1</sup>

#### THE PROBLEM OF NAVIGATION ON THE DANUBE

The Conference also looked into the subject of navigation on international inland waterways, raised by the American delegation. It was navigation on the Danube that held most of the attention of the representatives of the United States and Britain. While demagogically playing up the slogans like that of "freedom of trade", the U.S. and Britain were, as a matter of fact, seeking to establish their own control over navigation on the Danube so as to use it in pursuit of their imperialist ambitions in the Danubian countries. On the one hand, the U.S. and Britain wanted to strengthen the position of their monopolies in that area. As American liberally critical historians Joyce and Gabriel Kolko note, the U.S. and Britain expected that the freedom of navigation on the Danube would offer them an opportunity, "at an immense economic advantage, virtually to control the trade of the riparian states".<sup>2</sup> But the major ambition

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert Feis, *Between War and Peace...*, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power. The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, Evanston, London, 1972, p. 193.

of the United States and Britain was political—to bolster up the pillars of capitalism and forestall revolutionary change in the Danubian countries and to try and turn that region once again into a section of the *cordon sanitaire* and an anti-Soviet outpost of the camp of imperialism.

On July 23, a day after he got the report of the American atomic test explosion, Truman, with an air of ostentatious importance, put forward a proposal at the Berlin Conference providing that “there be free and unrestricted navigation of such inland waterways as border on two or more states and that the regulation of such navigation be provided by international authorities representative of all nations directly interested in navigation on the waterways concerned”.<sup>1</sup> The governments of the U.S. and Britain counted on their preponderant influence in those bodies. Historian Herbert Feis admits that this was “*the boldest paper*” submitted to the Conference and an “*expansive project*”.<sup>2</sup> A member of the American delegation, Robert Murphy, notes that “Truman’s goals were more ambitious” and that the proposal he had brought before the Conference was his “favourite project”.<sup>3</sup>

Truman reverted to the matter over and over again, insisting on its urgent settlement in line with the American proposals.

The Soviet delegation understood perfectly well what aims the U.S. and Britain pursued as they pushed those proposals. It considered them unacceptable. The Soviet position was that the navigation on the Danube must be regulated by the riparian States without any interference by the imperialist powers. Since it proved impossible to have the Conference pass such a decision, the only option left was to leave the question in abeyance.

When the matter was once more raised by Truman at the session of July 31, Stalin said: “The question of internal waterways has been put here additionally. This is a serious matter. It has to be studied. This has been an unexpected question for us. We have no relevant material at hand. It is a new question, and one that has to be examined by people who know these things. Perhaps, we can do something by the end of the Conference but this is rather unlikely.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert Feis, *Between War and Peace* ..., p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300. (Emphasis added—V.S.)

<sup>3</sup> Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, p. 277.

<sup>4</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, p. 266 (in Russian).

At the session of August 1, Truman raised the question once again. He insisted on it being mentioned in the communiqué. But as Robert Murphy pointed out in his reminiscences, "Stalin broke in... 'Nyet!'. Then, very deliberately, he repeated in English, 'No. I say no!'"<sup>1</sup>.

It was decided to limit the mention of that American proposal to the protocol of the Conference, pointing out that it was being referred for consideration to the Council of Foreign Ministers.<sup>2</sup>

So the Soviet delegation succeeded in preventing the Conference from adopting the American proposals on that issue, prejudicial to the interests of the Danubian countries. As Robert Murphy notes, Truman was extremely displeased with the failure of his "favourite project" he laid so much store by.<sup>3</sup>

### ATTITUDE TO FASCIST SPAIN

The Soviet representatives called on the Conference to discuss the attitude to the fascist regime of Franco in Spain. They proposed that the Conference recommend to the United Nations "to break off all relations with the Government of Franco".<sup>4</sup>

Churchill and Truman professed to be negative in their attitude to the Franco regime, yet they were actually speaking at the Conference in defence of Spanish fascism.

The chapter on admission to the United Nations Organisation in the documents of the Berlin Conference did, nevertheless, have the following written into it: "The Three Governments feel bound, however, to make it clear that they for their part would not favour any application for membership put forward by the present Spanish government, which, having been founded with the support of the Axis Powers, does not, in view of its origins, its nature, its record and its close association with the aggressor States, possess the qualifications necessary to justify such membership."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, p. 1497.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, p. 279.

<sup>4</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, p. 1173.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1493.

## GERMAN MILITARY UNITS PRESERVED BY BRITAIN

With over two months gone after the end of the war, the British Government was not through as yet with disarming and disbanding the German troops that had surrendered to the British. There was nothing accidental about it, naturally. The Soviet Government could not pass it over in silence. True, it did not raise the matter in general political terms, which might have drastically exacerbated the situation at the Conference, but confined itself to producing one hard fact. Yet even that was enough to make it clear to everybody what it was all about.

During the discussion of the manpower shortage in the British coal-mining industry at the plenary session on July 25, Stalin said that German prisoners of war could be made to work. Turning to Churchill, the head of the Soviet delegation casually remarked that the British had 400,000 German soldiers in Norway who were not even disarmed, and no one knew what they were waiting for. That was some manpower for the British coal-mining industry.

The British Premier, somewhat ill at ease, began to wriggle out.

Churchill said he did not know that they were not disarmed. In any case, he said, the British intention was to disarm them. He said he did not know exactly what the situation was but added that the arrangements had been made under SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force). However, he said he would inquire. But he could at once give the assurance that these troops would be disarmed.

Stalin said (to a burst of laughter) that he was in no doubt about that.

Churchill said the British did not want to keep them up their sleeves and that he would have a report made.<sup>1</sup>

On the same day, the Soviet delegation handed an aide-mémoire on the subject to the British delegation. It contained some hard facts to the effect that "the German troops located in the region between the cities of Mo and Trondheim, amounting to 260,000 men, and in the region of Trom-

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, pp. 386-387.

sö, 140,000 men, are holding on to their arms and military 'technique'... The personnel of these troops have not been interned and they have full freedom of movement".<sup>1</sup>

## THE WAR IN THE FAR EAST

The Conference discussed a number of other issues, including those unrelated to Europe. The most pressing one was that of terminating as soon as possible the war in the Far East, that is, smashing up the Japanese aggressors. The U.S. was as anxious as ever to see the U.S.S.R. enter into the war against Japan. Shortly before the Conference, the U.S. Chiefs of Staff adopted a decision concerted with Truman saying that there should be every encouragement of a Soviet entry into the war against Japan<sup>2</sup>. It was feared in the U.S. that otherwise the war against her would drag out for quite a long time yet and exact great sacrifice and effort.

In a conversation with Stalin on July 17, that is, before the Conference opened, Truman declared that "*the United States is looking forward to Soviet help in the war against Japan*", Stalin assured Truman that the U.S.S.R., in accordance with the Yalta decisions, "will be ready to go into action in mid-August and that it will keep its word."<sup>3</sup>

Officially, there was no such item on the agenda of the Conference as the Soviet entry into the war against the Japanese aggressors, but it continued to be discussed unofficially. On July 23, Churchill invited the members of the Soviet and American delegations to a luncheon at his residence. During the luncheon, Stalin, proposing a toast, said he wished the following Three-Power summit meeting might be held in Tokyo. During a conversation, he assured everybody that the Soviet Union would do everything it could to put the Japanese aggressors to rout.<sup>4</sup> In a conversation with U.S. Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, Stalin pointed out that Three-Power cooperation in the hostilities in the Far East would surely speed up victory. This would be a good thing for the entire world.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, p. 1037.

<sup>2</sup> William D. Leahy, *I Was There*, p. 383.

<sup>3</sup> *The Berlin (Potsdam) Conference*, p. 42 (Emphasis added—V.S.)

<sup>4</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, pp. 319-320.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 397.



Some American writers contend that in view of the hopes for the development of the atomic bomb, the U.S. representatives, while setting out for the Berlin Conference, were no longer interested in having the U.S.S.R. enter into the war against Japan.<sup>1</sup> But Truman's above-quoted request gives the lie to such contentions. Some more evidence to that effect can be found in Truman's memoirs: "There were many reasons for my going to Potsdam, but the most urgent, to my mind, was to get from Stalin a personal reaffirmation of Russia's entry into the war against Japan, a matter which our military chiefs were most anxious to clinch. This is what I was able to get from Stalin in the very first days of the conference."<sup>2</sup> A member of the American delegation, John R. Deane also notes that, though they knew all about the atomic bomb test, they still wanted Russian participation in the war against Japan for Russia alone was capable of destroying the Japanese forces on the mainland.<sup>3</sup>

The Soviet, American and British delegations which had arrived for the Conference included top-ranking military representatives of the Three Powers. It was immediately agreed that they were to meet to discuss the cooperation of the Armed Forces of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and Britain with a view to the earliest possible routing of the Japanese aggressors.

The first to meet were the Combined Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. and Britain who made a scrutiny of all the major aspects of the war against Japan, taking into account the atomic bomb the Americans now had at their disposal. At their meeting on July 19, at Potsdam, the Combined Chiefs of Staff decided that the aim should be to defeat Japan by November 15, 1946.<sup>4</sup>

On the morning of July 24, they met in the presence of Truman and Churchill. In spite of the atomic test explosion, it was found necessary to "encourage Russian entry into the war against Japan".<sup>5</sup>

The first meeting of the Chiefs of Staff of the Three Powers took place at noon on July 24. They considered the coordi-

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Charles L. Mee, Jr., *Meeting at Potsdam*, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 411.

<sup>3</sup> John R. Deane, *The Strange Alliance*, p. 267.

<sup>4</sup> William D. Leahy, *I Was There*, p. 410; *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 1, p. 915; Vol. 2, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, pp. 345, 1311, 1463; Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, 382.

nation of the action by the Armed Forces of the Three Powers in the war against the Japanese aggressors. The Soviet representative, Army General A. I. Antonov, informed those present that the Soviet forces were massing in the Far East and would be ready to start hostilities by mid-August. The Soviet concern in the Far East, he said, was to crush the Japanese forces in Manchuria and free the Liaotung Peninsula. Once Japan was defeated, the Soviet troops would be pulled out of Manchuria.

George C. Marshall reported the construction of airfields on American-occupied Okinawa from which to bomb the territory of Japan. American forces began to be shipped from Europe, the first few units having arrived in the Philippines. The U.S. ground forces already within the Pacific region had essentially ceased full-scale action and were preparing for the subsequent operation.

Marshall handed A. I. Antonov the written text of a number of specific questions (proposals) about cooperation and direct contact between the Soviet, American, and British Armed Forces during the forthcoming joint action against Japan. Antonov promised him to reply to those questions within a few days.<sup>1</sup>

The Chiefs of Staff of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. had a follow-up meeting on July 26. General Antonov read out the answers to the questions which had been passed to him. Additional concerted decisions were taken during the meeting with regard to individual aspects of these replies.

The Soviet side agreed to grant the U.S. request for American weather and radio stations to be set up at Khabarovsk and Petropavlovsk to compile weather reports on Eastern Siberia for transmission to the U.S. naval and air forces, considering the value of that information for the on-going and prospective operations.

The zone of Soviet and American naval and air activity in the Sea of Japan, the Okhotsk and Bering Seas, and air force activity in Korea and Manchuria had been concerted with due regard for the American proposals.

It was decided to set up liaison groups for communication between the Soviet and American commanders in the Far East right after the Soviet Union had launched military operations against Japan.

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<sup>1</sup> See: *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, p. 30 (in Russian); *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, pp. 345-352, 1327-1328.

The Soviet side informed the Americans that it was prepared to make the ports of Nakhodka, Nikolayevsk and Petropavlovsk as well as several airfields available for American naval and air forces for repairs, urgent medical assistance, etc. Concluding, General Antonov emphasised that all of those accords would come into effect upon the Soviet entry into the war against Japan, although the actual preparatory arrangements with regard to some matters could be made in advance.<sup>1</sup>

Truman and other Americans were hard at work while at Potsdam, though outside the framework of the Conference, thrashing out the problems of the war against Japan, including that of using atomic bombs against Japan. U.S. military leaders (like Leahy, Eisenhower, King, Arnold, MacArthur) suggested to Truman that there was no need to use the atomic bomb in order to win the war against Japan.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, on July 25, Truman issued his order for an atomic strike at Japan. In considering the reasons behind that decision, even Western historians admit that Truman and Byrnes decided to use the bomb against Japan because of the effect it would have on the U.S.S.R.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, using the bomb was to further the plans of U.S. imperialism for bringing the Far East under its domination.

In the evening of July 26, the Americans released for the press at Potsdam a proclamation, concerted with Britain and China, demanding Japan's unconditional surrender.<sup>4</sup> Truman and his advisers discussed also the question of whether or not to have such a declaration published on behalf of the U.S.S.R. as well. But they decided against it.<sup>5</sup> That also indicated that U.S. imperialism intended to boss the show in the Far East. The text of that declaration was handed over to the Soviet delegation in Berlin only after it had been circulated among the pressmen.<sup>6</sup> Naturally, such a position of the U.S. delegation could not be considered loyal in respect of the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Government acted in an entirely different way, concerting its moves with regard to Japan with the Anglo-American Allies. On July 13, the Japanese Ambassador in

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, pp. 408-417.

<sup>2</sup> Charles L. Mee, Jr., *Meeting at Potsdam*, p. 238.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 239, 240.

<sup>4</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, pp. 1474-1476.

<sup>5</sup> Charles L. Mee, Jr. *Meeting at Potsdam*, pp. 242-243.

<sup>6</sup> *The Berlin (Potsdam) Conference*, pp. 218, 382-384 (in Russian).

Moscow, Naotake Sato, handed a letter to the USSR People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs asking for the Soviet Government's consent to the arrival in Moscow of a Japanese special envoy, a former Premier, Prince Konoye. Enclosed in the letter was a message from the Emperor of Japan stating his "imperial wish to end the war".<sup>1</sup> But neither of those documents contained any specific account either of the objectives of Prince Konoye's visit to the U.S.S.R. or of his powers. In the evening of July 17, Stalin informed Churchill and subsequently also Truman of that proposal concerning the substance of the reply with them.<sup>2</sup>

On July 18, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs S. A. Lozovsky handed Sato the Soviet Government's reply pointing out that "the Imperial views stated in the message of the Emperor of Japan are general in form and contain no concrete proposals. The mission of Prince Konoye, special envoy, is also not clear to the Government of the U.S.S.R."<sup>3</sup> Therefore it "does not see a possibility of giving any definite answer on the subject of the Imperial message and also on Prince Konoye's mission."<sup>4</sup>

The Anglo-American participants in the Berlin conference were informed of that answer in the evening of the same day.<sup>5</sup>

At the Big-Three Meeting on July 28, Stalin announced that he had received yet another message from the Japanese Government. But he added: "Although we are not properly informed of some documents about Japan being drawn up, we believe, however, that we should inform each other of the new proposals." The head of the Soviet Government expressed the opinion that the reply to the latest Japanese message should be as negative as to the previous one. Truman and Attlee agreed to that proposal.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, the U.S. Government was quite disturbed by Japan's overtures to initiate negotiations about terminating the war with the Soviet Government's mediation. American secret services succeeded in deciphering Japan's diplomatic

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<sup>1</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 1, p. 879.

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, Prem 3/430/7; *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, pp. 1587-1588.

<sup>3</sup> *FRUS. The Conference of Berlin*, Vol. 2, p. 1251.

<sup>4</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, p. 524 (in Russian).

<sup>5</sup> Public Record Office, Prem. 3/430/8.

<sup>6</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, p. 222 (in Russian).

code, and they were closely following the correspondence between the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japanese Embassy in Moscow. Charles L. Mee, Jr. points out that the U.S. Government feared lest Japan should surrender to the Three Powers through Soviet mediation channels, or even to the U.S.S.R. alone. The Americans were wondering, Mee writes: "And then where would American power be in the Far East? How was Truman to keep victory from slipping through his fingers?"<sup>1</sup>

It was four days after the Berlin Conference was over, on August 6, that the Americans dropped their atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The second bomb they had was dropped on Nagasaki three days later. But those bombs did not deter the Japanese military establishment from carrying on the resistance. The hard core of the Japanese ground forces had not yet been brought into action, nor did Japan consider surrendering. The United States had no more atomic bombs. It would have taken a considerable amount of time to make some more of them. The Americans had some bases for their bombers to strike at Japan from, but the bulk of their forces were still too far away from Japan for them to consider an invasion of the Japanese islands in the immediate future. Japan was still occupying Indonesia, the Philippines, Indochina, and vast expanses of China.

In perfect agreement with the promises which the Soviet representatives had given at Yalta and reaffirmed at the Berlin Conference, the Soviet Government decided on the Soviet entry into the war against the Japanese aggressors. On August 8, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Vyacheslav Molotov, summoned the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow Naotake Sato and made a statement to the effect that, after the defeat and capitulation of Hitler Germany, "Japan has proved to be the only Great Power still in favour of continued war". The Soviet Government resolved to join the war against the Japanese aggressors which was "the only means capable of bringing peace nearer". The People's Commissar declared that the Soviet Union would consider itself at war with Japan as from August 9.<sup>2</sup>

Japan had long been on the path of aggression and land-grabbing. In 1904, she perfidiously attacked Russia and chopped off some slices of her territory. In the very first

<sup>1</sup> Charles L. Mee, Jr., *Meeting at Potsdam*, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union... Documents*, Vol. 111, pp. 362-363.

days of the Soviet State, Japanese imperialism struck up an extremely hostile posture in relation to it. While being involved in the armed intervention against the newborn Soviet Republic in 1918-1922, Japan attempted to capture the Soviet Far East. Having started the aggression against China and occupied Manchuria in 1931, Japan once more launched preparations for an attack on the U.S.S.R. The danger of an invasion of the Soviet Far East by the Japanese aggressors was particularly great in the spring of 1934. In 1937, fascist and militarist Japan, encountering no resistance to speak of, once again set out to capture more of China. The Soviet Union declared more than once at the time that it was ready and willing to join the United States, Great Britain and other countries concerned in any collective action to put an end to the Japanese aggression but those countries left the Soviet proposals unanswered. The Soviet Union was shipping extensive war supplies to China but considered it impossible, naturally, to enter into the war against Japan openly alone in behalf of China,<sup>1</sup> still less so since even China did not consider itself to be at war with Japan. Things were different in August 1945, when China, the United States, Great Britain and other United Nations were already fighting Japan. That was the kind of collective front the Soviet Union had pressed so hard for in the 1930s. The Soviet Government acted on the assumption that the U.S.S.R. should join that collective front in order to render assistance to China and other victims of the Japanese aggression, take part in liberating them from the invaders, and cut short the predatory actions of Japanese imperialism.

The Soviet Government was, naturally, most anxious, while sharing in the rout of the Japanese aggressors, to secure the national interests of the U.S.S.R. in the Far East, regain the Russian lands seized by Japan, and strengthen the security of the Far Eastern frontiers of the Soviet Union to meet the contingency of any renewed Japanese aggression.

There was a powerful group of Japanese forces—the Kwantung Army—in Manchuria. Its total strength was upwards of 1,000,000 men. It had 1,215 tanks, 6,640 guns and mortars, and 1,907 combat aircraft.

In the face of a threatened attack by Japan, the Soviet Union had to keep sizable forces on its Far Eastern borders

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<sup>1</sup> For details see: Vilnis Sipols, *Diplomatic Battles Before World War II*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1981.

all through the war. Those forces had 1,185,000 men on the Victory-over-Germany Day. Considerable reinforcements were shipped to the Far East during the three subsequent months. By the time the hostilities were to begin, the Soviet forces in the Far East had 1,747,000 men, 5,250 tanks and self-propelled guns, 29,835 guns and mortars, and 5,171 combat aircraft.<sup>1</sup> That is to say that the Soviet forces had substantial superiority over the Japanese. The quality of the Soviet military equipment was also higher.

The Soviet forces inflicted a heavy defeat on the Kwantung Army during the first six days of combat operations which opened on August 9. It was totally smashed up before long, with some of the Japanese officers and men having been taken prisoner. The Soviet forces landed in Korea, South Sakhalin and on the Kuril Islands. The American Supreme Commander in the Far East, General Douglas MacArthur, declared on August 9: "I am delighted at the Russian declaration of war against Japan. This will make possible a great pincers movement that cannot fail to end in the destruction of the enemy."<sup>2</sup>

With the Soviet Union in the war, Japan's ruling establishment came to the conclusion that it was no longer possible to escape defeat. On August 14, the Japanese Government announced acceptance of the terms of the Potsdam Declaration of July 26 about Japan. So it took as few as 12 days since the end of the Berlin Conference to score the victory over fascist and militarist Japan too. The official ceremony of the signing of the instrument of surrender of Japan took place on September 2.

The defeat of imperialist Japan had been a foregone conclusion right after the victory over Germany which the U.S.S.R. had been principally instrumental in bringing about. It was likewise the Soviet Union that made the major contribution towards victory over Japan in the closing stages of the war against her.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Moscow, 1980, Vol. 11, pp. 182, 184, 197 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *The Meaning of Yalta. Big Three Diplomacy and the New Balance of Power*, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Vol. 11, p. 6 (in Russian).

The Conference of Berlin, with the active participation of the U.S.S.R., adopted major decisions which struck the balance of the Second World War started by imperialist Germany but won by the coalition of the U.S.S.R., the United States, Great Britain and their Allies. The decisions it passed came to make up the bedrock of the post-war peace settlement in Europe.

The Soviet Union's paramount concern at the Conference was to get it to produce such decisions as would make any renewed German aggression impossible. That was the reason behind the decision to demilitarise, denazify and democratise Germany. She was shorn of her Eastern regions which had more than once served as the springboard for German aggression eastward, including her attacks on Poland in 1939, and on the U.S.S.R. in 1941.

The Soviet representatives did everything possible, furthermore, for the principles of democracy and progress to underlie the decisions taken at the Conference with respect to the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe. The representatives of the United States and Great Britain were stubbornly seeking conditions for interference in the domestic affairs of the People's Democracies, for the export of counter-revolution as well as for the implementation of their imperialistic and expansionist plans. But the Soviet delegation succeeded in thwarting those attempts and upholding the interests of the peoples who had set out to build a new type of society.

The fact that the Soviet Union proved to be capable of having its proposals prevail with regard to most of the questions the Conference considered was due to the decisive role it had played in the destruction of Nazi Germany's war machine, to the fundamental change of the power balance in Europe and to the continued consolidation of the Soviet Union's international positions. The United States and Britain proved unable to impose their own will on the Soviet Union even through atomic blackmail. They had to reckon with the Soviet stand.

The Conference of Berlin brought together nations which belonged to different social systems. But, just as in wartime, they had to deal with problems that they could resolve only by a joint effort, at the negotiating table. Therefore, in spite of the sharp debate (the British and American rep-



representatives quite often made a point of overdramatising it), the Conference strove to work out compromise solutions acceptable to all of them. The Soviet delegation, for its part, made the greatest possible effort towards achieving common solutions to the issues under consideration.

By and large, the Soviet Government was satisfied with the decisions of the Conference. Stalin expressed that satisfaction in his closing statement at the Conference: "The Conference may, perhaps, be called a success."<sup>1</sup>

The Conference of Berlin summed up Three-Power cooperation in the war years. At the same time, the Soviet representatives declared more than once that they were anxious for this cooperation to continue in time of peace as well.

The Berlin Meeting of the Heads of Government of the U.S.S.R, the U.S. and Great Britain was an event of great historic significance. It has gone down in history as one of the most important international conferences ever held. The fundamental principles it laid down for a peace settlement have made it possible for the peoples of Europe to live without war, at peace with each other, for four decades now.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)*, p. 300 (in Russian).

## CONCLUSION

The outcome of the Second World War was being decided, above all, on the battlefields, those of the Soviet-German Front, first and foremost. It was there that the major forces confronted each other, the heaviest fighting went on, and the "invincible" German armies were stopped. The unprecedented Battles of Stalingrad and Kursk turned the tide of the war. The Soviet forces smashed up the hard core of the German forces and destroyed the greater part of their military equipment. In that way, the Soviet forces made the decisive contribution towards defeating Nazi Germany and, in consequence, the entire bloc of fascist aggressors.

The Soviet Union had Great Britain and the United States fighting side by side with it against Nazi Germany and her allies in the aggression. But the contribution each of the Three Powers made towards crushing their common foe was far from identical. The Western Allies got actually involved in the war against Germany, the major aggressor, only after the landing of their forces in Northern France in June 1944, that is, after the opening of the Second Front in Europe. But that was not the main battlefront.

The Soviet people lost over twenty million lives to win the victory. The British casualties totalled 370,000 and the American just about 300,000.<sup>1</sup>

Having crossed the national frontier to smash up the aggressor forces altogether, the Soviet armies discharged a great liberating mission by driving off the Nazi invaders from the territory of some of the other countries they occupied. The captive nations were thus able to regain their independence.

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Second World War*, Moscow, 1982, Vol. 12, p. 151 (in Russian).

The Soviet Government's foreign policy was most instrumental in bringing about the victory. It contributed towards creating and consolidating the Soviet Union's Alliance with Great Britain and the United States and also towards setting up a larger association, the United Nations Organisation. A powerful coalition, substantially stronger than the German-led bloc, was created. That went a long way towards clinching the issue.

The cooperation of the Soviet Union, a Socialist state, with imperialist powers—Great Britain and the United States in the war was not a simple thing. Suffice it to point out that Great Britain and the United States opened the Second Front only three years after Germany's attack on the U.S.S.R., or less than a year before the war was over in Europe. There were essential differences between the war goals of the Three Powers. The Soviet Government pursued the fair objective of liberation. The U.S.S.R. fought for its own survival, for the expulsion of the German aggressors from the other countries which they had overrun, and for making it impossible for Germany to start yet another war ever again. Great Britain had different aims. She fought to keep her empire, that is, her possessions all over the world, and to strengthen her foothold everywhere. The United States, having built up great military power during the war years and having the monopoly of atomic weapons, sought to establish its world-wide supremacy.

As the war drew to a close, the gap between the positions of the Three Powers was widening. The U.S.S.R. had done everything possible to prevent their alliance from breaking up and preserve it until the end of the war.

The Soviet Government made great efforts for the fair and democratic resolution of the problems of post-war peace settlement. The Soviet representatives at the Tehran, Yalta, and Berlin Conferences played an essential role in that respect. The U.S.S.R. was active in establishing the United Nations Organisation and in drafting its Charter.

The Soviet Government attached special importance to measures to prevent any renewed German aggression. It had taken Germany only two decades, after the First World War, to prepare and start another, more cruel one. After the Second World War, Europe has been living in peace for forty years now. That is the best indication of how far this major problem was then solved.

The Soviet people's heroism in repelling the Nazi invad-

ers, and the decisive contribution they made towards crushing the aggressor bloc, have earned the Soviet Union the tremendous respect of the people of all nations and raised its international prestige to an unprecedented level. The U.S.S.R. has come to play a great part in resolving world problems.

Ever since the end of war, the Soviet Government has been working very hard, indeed, to secure a safe and lasting peace. It has shown great interest in the establishment of broad cooperation with other nations with a view to preventing another world war.

The Soviet Union has been consistently pursuing this policy of peace. At the same time, the outcome of the Great Patriotic War conclusively demonstrated the Soviet people's will and ability to strike back at and defeat any aggressor. That is a lesson for all aggressive forces to learn today just as well.

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